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## ROCK CREEK PARK

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



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august 1990

by

William Bushong

**ROCK CREEK PARK • DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

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I owe thanks to many National Park Service staff professionals for their support and contributions to this study. Rock Creek Park historian David Smith generously shared the Nature Center library research and photograph files on the park and provided advice in the formative stages of the research. Pierce Mill's site manager Ted Hazen and miller Stephen Strach provided information on the mill's history and contributed to the accuracy of the study. Rock Creek Park's maintenance chief David Newman provided assistance in the identification of park sites and structures. National Capital regional historian Gary Scott's encouragement throughout the preparation of this document was most appreciated. Cartographic technician Norbert Erickson provided significant assistance compiling information on the physical data of Rock Creek Park. Regional archeologist Stephen R. Potter reviewed the summary background concerning the prehistory of the Rock Creek Park area. His editorial remarks vastly improved the accuracy and content of this portion of the report. Historian Robie Lange, Historic American Engineering Record, generously shared a survey of Rock Creek Park's bridges conducted by Marsha Miller. National Park Service historian Barry Mackintosh, History Division, kindly agreed to review the manuscript, and his constructive criticism provided noteworthy improvements to the text.

Piera M. Weiss, RLA, merits special mention for her contributions to this study. Her friendly and enthusiastic support of the project and willingness to share research on the history of Rock Creek Park was heartily appreciated. Ms. Weiss contributed long hours to this project with little compensation, prepared the historic resources maps, and served as an expert adviser in the identification and evaluation of the historic landscape of Rock Creek Park.

My wife Rebecca made vital contributions with her editorial assistance and advice in preparing the manuscript. Above all her loving support and encouragement inspired completion of the research project.

William Bushong  
Washington, D. C.  
March 23, 1990



## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Rock Creek Park, located in northwest Washington, D. C., was created by legislation enacted by Congress on September 27, 1890. The reservation was established for the scenic and recreational enjoyment of the people of the United States and for nearly one hundred years Rock Creek Park has served the public well. Today the park is one of the national capital's greatest assets. It will observe its centennial year as a national park with its famous contemporary Yosemite, also authorized by Congress in 1890.<sup>1</sup> Set aside when the surrounding countryside was mostly rural, Rock Creek Park is a 1,754.62 acre predominantly natural forested valley within a heavily urbanized region. In this respect it is unusual because unlike other great American urban parks created in the nineteenth century, such as Central Park in New York City (1856), Golden Gate Park in San Francisco (1870), or the Boston Metropolitan Park System (1878-1895), which were designed and then built, Rock Creek Park was created by the forces of nature.

The core of Rock Creek Park is the creek and its picturesque gorgelike scenery. Particularly impressive is a one mile stretch of rapids and a rocky stream bed immediately south of Military Road. In contrast to the bold and picturesque valley core, Rock Creek Park also has gentle sloping hills and grassy meadows. This combination of landforms and the present vegetative character of the Rock Creek Valley's watershed has been described by landscape architect and historian Piera M. Weiss in the following manner:

Rock Creek originates in Laytonsville, Montgomery County [Maryland] and has a watershed of approximately 77 square miles, 16.8 of which are in the District of Columbia. The watershed lies within the physiographic region of the Piedmont with characteristic rolling and hilly topography. The dominant vegetative composition today in the upper reaches in Montgomery County is oak - tulip poplar and is considered in the pre-climax or climax stage, that is, able to reproduce the same species barring any change in environment. The underlying topography is gently rolling with a floodplain which becomes more steeply sloped just north of the District line. The topography in the District of Columbia is more dramatic with steep ravines and the narrower floodplain characteristic of the Fall line. The dominant vegetative

composition is oak, tulip poplar, beech with an understory of mountain laurel, holly, and dogwood on the hills, and sycamore, red maple, and wet tolerant understory in the areas along the floodplain. In areas where farming was practiced in years past or where the forest was cut for other purposes, such as the construction of Fort DeRussy during the Civil War, the vegetation composition reflects the primary stages of forest succession, eastern juniper, pine, and tulip poplar, found in this part of the east coast.<sup>2</sup>

Rock Creek Park contains approximately 1429 acres of natural forest growth and accommodates just over 300 acres of intensive recreational facilities, roads, trails, structures and sites. Frequent use of the park roads by commuters and other individuals has had a significant impact on the character of the park and its natural resources. Pleasure drives along park roads can only be enjoyed on weekends or during non-rush hour weekdays. Automobile emissions from this heavy commuter traffic also adversely affects the air quality of the park. The reservation is roughly bounded on the east and west by major arterial roads (Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues and Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Sixteenth Streets), and Beach Drive and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway experience heavy morning and evening surges of traffic created by Maryland commuters. In addition, Military Road, a four-lane divided highway, bisects the park in an east-west orientation. This ten-acre highway strip breaks the natural continuity of the park into two roughly equal sections. Wise and Park Roads, which are east-west connections in the park, also receive a relatively high volume of traffic.<sup>3</sup>

The geographic scope of this study was determined by legal and historical considerations. The study area was Reservation 339, the land set aside by Congress as Rock Creek Park in 1890 with related boundary rectifications and additions. The Piney Branch Parkway, acquired by the government in 1907 and extended in the 1920s, was included in this study because it is legally part of Reservation 339. Furthermore, there is also historical justification for the parkway's inclusion in a potential Rock Creek Park Historic District because this land area was surveyed and included in the comprehensive plan for Rock Creek Park. The plan was prepared in 1917-18 by the famous Brookline, Massachusetts landscape architecture firm of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and his half-brother John C. Olmsted. Today both men are acknowledged as masters in their field. Their plan for Rock Creek

Park was adopted in 1919 and has remained a vital management document ever since. As an administrative unit, Rock Creek Park presently contains many other urban parks that are not contiguous to Reservation 339, including the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Normanstone Parkway, Soapstone and Klingle Valleys. These areas were acquired and integrated into Washington's park system between 1913 and 1950 as access routes and a means of preserving the watershed of the Rock Creek Valley. Although the Melvin Hazen Park and Pinehurst Parkway are contiguous to Rock Creek Park, they were acquired and consolidated as park land within the recent past and do not share the Piney Branch Parkway's early legal or historical associations to Reservation 339.<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this study is to survey, identify, and evaluate Rock Creek Park's above-ground historic cultural resources, to support the park's general management plan, and to provide the documentation necessary to document the registration of these eligible sites and structures in the National Register of Historic Places. Significant prehistoric and historic archeological sites have not been considered.<sup>5</sup> The survey process began with a review of the extensive primary and secondary sources related to the history of Rock Creek Park in order to identify potential historic contexts. Previous field work and survey forms for Rock Creek Park's cultural resources were also compiled. In 1934-35 the Pierce Mill and Pierce-Klingle mansion complexes were surveyed and documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey. Since that time these complexes and several park bridges (Boulder and Ross Drive) have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination forms for these properties and data on the park's List of Classified Structures was also obtained. In addition, copies of Historic American Engineering Record survey forms of Rock Creek Park's historic bridges, completed in 1988, were also reviewed. The data from previous survey and field work provided the basis for the compilation of a preliminary list of properties in Rock Creek Park with recognized or potential historic or architectural significance.

At this stage a base map of the park was made by Piera M. Weiss, RLA. Utilizing pertinent sheets of a map series prepared by Greenhorne and O'Mara, Inc. of Riverdale, Maryland for the National Capital Planning Commission from aerial photography in 1981, a composite of Rock Creek Park's land area was compiled at a scale of 1"= 200'. A map was then prepared at a scale of 1"= 400'. The purpose of the reduction was to create a

modern topographical map on the same scale as that used by the Olmsted Brothers in their survey of Rock Creek Park. A mylar overlay was then prepared to compare the 1918 Olmsted park topographical map of the existing and proposed landscape units and circulation system with that of the 1980s. This base map was also compared to a 1939 National Park Service annotated copy of the 1918 Olmsted map.<sup>6</sup> The National Park Service annotation located existing utilities, roads, trails, structures, and attractions in the park on the Olmsted map. The comparison of the mylar and historic maps provided a reliable visual aid for determining locations of potentially significant properties and for assessing the historic integrity of the designed alignment of roads and trails and of the Olmsted plan's organization of landscape units.

After the completion of a base map, a reconnaissance survey was undertaken by automobile and on foot of all structures indicated by the 1981 map of Greenhorne and O'Mara, Inc. Historic maps of the study area from 1800 to 1950 were also examined to identify potential historic structures or sites in the park not indicated by modern mapping. Historic photographs, plans, and drawings were also reviewed for information concerning the physical development of the park and to document the integrity of specific properties. An intensive survey was then conducted of all sites or structures built or developed prior to World War II. Field work for evaluating the park landscape and circulation system was conducted with the advice and assistance of Ms. Weiss.

The narrative history of the park in Part I of this report was largely based on research in archival, cartographic, photographic, and special collections located at the Library of Congress, the National Archives and Records Administration, George Washington University, Historical Society of Washington, D. C., and the District of Columbia Public Library. Park history and physical data files located at the National Capital Region headquarters and Rock Creek Nature Center were also reviewed and utilized. Newspaper articles, planning reports, and local and regional historical literature located at the major Washingtoniana collections in the city also provided important insights into the history of Rock Creek Park and the background material for the development of the historic contexts. The second section of the report provides a description and significance assessment for each potential contributor to a proposed Rock Creek Park Historic District. A selection of illustrations, largely comprised of historical views of the park, has also been

provided. This study also includes a map appendix containing the 1918 Olmsted landscape survey map, and a three-part historic resources base map. In addition, an extensive bibliography has also been prepared.

A principal goal of this study was to document the eligibility of the centennial Rock Creek Park for the National Register of Historic Places. However, it is also intended by the author that the following narrative will build on National Park Service historian Barry Mackintosh's 1985 study of the administrative history of Rock Creek Park, and ultimately contribute to the general management plan, and interpretive programs of the park. It is also hoped that this study and the nomination derived from it, will aid the National Park Service to promote public appreciation of the enormous historic, as well as natural, value inherent to this public landscape.

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## CHAPTER I

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Barry Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History (Washington: Department of the Interior, 1985), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Piera M. Weiss, "The Origins of Rock Creek Park," A Paper Presented at the Sixteenth Annual Conference of Local History, District of Columbia Public Library, March 4, 1989. Unpublished typescript in the possession of the author.

<sup>3</sup>"Statement for Management, Rock Creek Park," On File at the National Capital Region Headquarters, Washington, D. C. See also "Adjacent Land Use Study, Rock Creek Park, Washington, D. C." Prepared by Northeast Team Denver Service Center. (Washington: National Park Service, 1985), p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>Additions to Rock Creek Park are discussed in Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 46-69. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway are the subject of a separate study, see Jere L. Krakow, "Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway" Unpublished typescript, 1988. Copy on File at the National Park Service, Denver Service Center, Denver Colorado.

<sup>5</sup>For a list and description of archeological sites surveyed and identified in Rock Creek Park to date, see Rock Creek Watershed Conservation Study. Washington: United States Department of Interior, Denver Service Center, 1979; and Paul Y. Inashima, Rock Creek Park and Rock Creek Park and Potomac Parkway. Washington: United States Department of Interior, Denver Service Center, 1985. A seperate project for the identification, evaluation, and nomination of eligible archeological sites will be conducted by the National Capital Region in the near future.

<sup>6</sup>The maps "Diagrammatic Plan for Landscape Units..." (Olmsted Bros., 1918) and "Rendered and Annotated Blueline" (Olmsted Bros., NPS 1939) are located in File 55.7, RG 79. Records of the National Park Service, Cartographic Branch, National Archives and Records and Administration, Alexandria, Virginia.

## CHAPTER II

### Background Summary of the Prehistory and History of Washington, D. C. Area Prior to 1790.

Human occupation of the land area known today as the District of Columbia probably dates from 10,000 to 20,000 years ago, a time in prehistoric life referred to by archeologists as the Paleoindian Period. Although no major Paleoindian sites have been discovered in the District, sufficient data has been gathered from excavations in the region for archeologists to postulate that human groups probably hunted game in the Washington area sometime before 9,000 B.C. Fluted projectile points, found by nineteenth collectors at Anacostia and northwest Washington, have been dated between 9,000 and 9,500 B.C. Moreover, studies of regional climatic and ecological conditions in this period indicate that hunters and gatherers would have had ample game for subsistence, including woodland caribou, elk, moose, black bear, mastodon, mammoth, and musk ox. In addition, the Potomac basin would have provided an ideal natural corridor for nomadic groups migrating between the Mississippi and Ohio valleys and the Atlantic coastal plains.<sup>1</sup>

As the continental ice sheets of the Wisconsin glacial epoch began to recede about 12,000 years ago, environmental conditions in the Eastern United States transformed dramatically from cool coniferous to temperate boreal and deciduous forests. Archeologists designate this era of human adaption to these new environmental conditions, which stabilized into our modern climate around 8,000 B.C., as the Archaic Period. Man's use of artifacts, such as stone mortars, pestles, and milling stones marked this archeological sequence in the Potomac Valley, as it did elsewhere in the Mid-Atlantic region. The use of these implements illustrated a shift toward a more settled pattern of life with a greater reliance on food gathering and processing than that of the hunting bands of the glacial Pleistocene age. Generally, the Archaic Period in the eastern United States continued from 8,000 until about 1,300 B.C. By the time of the first millennium B.C. significant cultural innovations, represented by the production of pottery, domestication and cultivation of native plants, and the development of elaborate mortuary

practices, marked a transition toward the beginnings of a new period known as the Woodland.

Rock Creek Park possesses at least three known archeological sites from the Archaic and Woodland Periods. One of these is the famous Piney Branch quartzite quarry, which archeologists interpret as an active work site for the extraction of material for tools and weapons between 3,000 B. C. and 1,100 B.C. The other two sites are the remnants of hunting base camps found by National Park Service archeologists along Rock Creek in 1985. One of these sites documented occupation in the Early and Late Archaic Periods and the other revealed the use by prehistoric man of the site in the Late Archaic and Early Woodland Periods. Artifacts recovered from the sites indicated use for the processing of meat, nuts, and other foods, hide work, light woodworking, and stone tool production.<sup>2</sup>

It is believed that the transition from Archaic lifeways continued in the Potomac Valley well into the Woodland Period, which roughly dates from 1,000 B.C. to European contact. Simple pottery has been excavated in the lower Potomac Valley that dates to ca. 1370 B. C. Although local Early Woodland cultures had contact with people living elsewhere in the East, the extent and significance of this interaction on the population of the Potomac Valley has yet to be fully researched. The paucity of archeological data from the Woodland period in Washington, D. C. precludes the formation of definite conclusions concerning the development of local tribal cultures before European contact. In fact, much of what is known of late Woodland culture within the city's limits has been extrapolated from the accounts of explorers, missionaries, traders, and colonists. In general the story of prehistoric Washington is fragmentary, but existing evidence suggests that the investment of further study of the cultures that inhabited the nation's capital before Anglo-Indian contact will be rewarding.<sup>3</sup>

#### Aboriginal Inhabitants, European Contact, and Trade.

The coastal region of North America that is today the shoreline of Maryland and Virginia was probably explored by Spanish explorers and French fur traders as early as the first half of the sixteenth century, but material evidence of their presence has yet to be discovered. The first permanent English settlement in the New World was established at

Jamestown by the London Company in 1607. It was from these colonists, particularly the famous adventurer Captain John Smith, that early detailed descriptions of the aboriginal life of the Potomac River Valley in the early seventeenth century originated.<sup>4</sup>

Smith started explorations of the Virginia rivers during the first years of the Jamestown settlement. His exploratory trading forays resulted in the 1612 publication of A Map of Virginia, which consisted of an engraved map and descriptive text of the Chesapeake's geography and Indian inhabitants. Past American historians have long suspected some of Smith's observations, especially the celebrated tale of his rescue by Pocahontas, but the 1612 map and descriptions of tribal groups living in the Potomac Valley have proven to be generally reliable. In fact, modern scholars consistently praise Smith's Map of Virginia for its well-defined geographical information, and its important contribution to the ethnology of the Indian tribes.<sup>5</sup>

At the time Smith and his party sailed the waters of the Potomac and its tributaries, he came into most frequent contact with the Algonquian groups or districts ruled by the paramount chief Powhatan. The territory of the Powhatan Chiefdom, composed of between fourteen to possibly as many as thirty Algonquian districts, extended from the Potomac to the James River taking in a vast land area east of the Fall line in what today is Tidewater Virginia. His observations during his travels suggest a passage beyond the mouth of Rock Creek in the attempt to follow the course of the Potomac River to the head of navigation.

John Smith's description of the aboriginal villages of northern Virginia, the present District of Columbia, and southern Maryland included the general location of Indian villages in the vicinity of Washington with an estimate of the number of male warriors in each tribe. His Map of Virginia located the village of Tauxenent near Mount Vernon, and noted the Patawmecke occupation of a village near the mouth of Potomac Creek, as well as that of a small village on the Virginia shore just across from Analostan (Theodore Roosevelt) Island. Villages located within the present District boundaries included an unnamed village just below Little Falls between MacArthur Boulevard and the C & O Canal, and the settlement of the Nacostins (often anglicized as Anacostians, from which Anacostia derives its name) on the east bank of the Anacostia River in what today is known as the Benning neighborhood. The latter tribe lived on the northern fringe of the Conoy

territory, and it is believed that they were affiliated with this incipient chiefdom. The Conoy territory extended from the Potomac to within the area of present day Baltimore, and included much of southern Maryland. Several Conoy villages were described by Captain John Smith, including Moyaone (at Piscataway Creek in Prince George's county), Pamunkey (located six miles south down the Potomac), and Portobak (situated at the head of Port Tobacco River).<sup>6</sup>

After Smith's celebrated writings, the best known account of a trip on the Potomac River in the early seventeenth century was recorded by a young English adventurer named Henry Fleet. He was the one of seven sons of William and Deborah Fleet of Chatham, Kent, and arrived with several of his brothers in Jamestown in 1621. Soon thereafter he led a party of men from Jamestown up the Potomac River to trade for corn. Upon reaching the village of the Patowomeke, he made trading overtures to their chief, who declined his offer. However, the tribal leader proposed a foraging raid on Nacochanke, the village of his enemies, the Nacostins. Fleet agreed to the plan and his men and fifty Patowomeke bowmen plundered and burned the village. They killed eighteen men in the attack and drove the women and children into the woods. The survivors retreated to the safety of a village of the neighboring Piscataway, their Conoy kinsmen, and within the year, warriors exacted revenge by sacking the Patowmeke village.<sup>7</sup>

A year after this attack Fleet, with Henry Spelman, led a group of men to the land of the Nacostins to trade for corn. During trade negotiations the Nacostins suddenly attacked the group, killed Spelman and twenty other Englishmen, and captured Fleet. Historian William Tindall described Fleet as "a man of sense, and brave almost to the point of fool-hardiness."<sup>8</sup> The young explorer must also have been either very persuasive or was lucky, because he survived the surprise attack and actually benefitted from the incident. During five years of captivity, Fleet learned the Algonquian language, customs, and the geography of the region. Eventually he was ransomed and Fleet returned to England and enticed investors into financing an 1631 expedition with the intention of establishing a fur trading monopoly in the Potomac Valley. However, fur trading interests in Virginia had been granted to a rival English company. In addition, the Nacostins already were the middlemen for the lucrative beaver trade with the interior tribes of the Upper Potomac, including the "man-eating Mowhaks" with whom Fleet

intended to negotiate trade agreements. Undeterred, the Englishman attempted to establish direct trade contacts with the Iroquois-speaking Massawomeck group, but the Nacostins effectively blocked the establishment of his planned trading empire in the region.<sup>9</sup>

The village of Nacotchtanke may have been the locus of a major trading network at the time of Fleet's voyage. In fact, the name of the Potomac River had been derived from the Algonquian language meaning "something brought" or interpreted more freely as a designation for a "trading place." According to his journals, Fleet witnessed hundreds of Indians in the vicinity bartering furs and other wares and must have coveted the profits inherent to participating in these gatherings. Henry Fleet has been credited as the first European to set foot on the land area that is now Washington.<sup>10</sup> His now-famous description of the area in 1632 was typical of a seventeenth century European's idyllic accounts of the New World:

This place without all question is the most pleasant and heathful place in all this country, and most convenient for habitation, the air temperate in summer and not violent in winter. It aboundeth in all manner of fish. The Indians one night commonly will catch thirty sturgeon in a place where the river is not twelve fathoms broad. And as for deer, buffaloes, bears, turkey, the woods do swarm with them, and the soil is exceedingly fertile.<sup>11</sup>

In later years Fleet played an active role in the establishment of an English colony in Maryland. Recruited as guide and interpreter, he aided Leonard Calvert, first Governor of Maryland and brother of Lord Baltimore, in establishing relations with the Piscataway of southern Maryland. Fleet helped the colonists avoid a potentially disastrous conflict with the tribe and in 1637 persuaded Calvert to establish a settlement at the mouth of St. Mary's River near Fleet's own trading post with the Yowacomaco Indians. In 1638, Fleet became a member of the Maryland House of Assembly at the new colonial capital, and there is documentation of his service in the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1652.<sup>12</sup>

Henry Fleet promoted the Washington area in the 1630s as a land of great natural beauty and unlimited abundance. Yet, archeologists today believe that even before European diseases decimated the Indian tribes of the region in the seventeenth century, aboriginal life expectancy was relatively short and infant mortality was high. Moreover, the level of subsistence

probably fluctuated with seasonal conditions, rather than the constant banquet reported by Fleet. A site that might have provided vital data on the aboriginal populations of the Washington area was the Necostin village of Nacochtanke. It once occupied the site area of what now is Bolling Air Force Base and the Pepco power plant. Although much information has been lost, the Smithsonian Institution's collection of Indian artifacts collected on the site's surface in the nineteenth century, comparative archeological work, and the accounts of Smith and Fleet, provide enough data for archeologists to recreate a general picture of this important village at the time of European contact.

It is believed that Nacotchtanke had a small central palisade containing the district chief's residence and important associated religious structures. The pattern of housing was dispersed, and clusters of dwellings were erected adjacent to large agricultural fields. Bark-covered long-houses with light wooden frames, drying racks, cooking spits, and other dependencies were built. In addition to the beans, squash, corn and other agricultural products cultivated by the tribe, their diet consisted of freshwater clams, turtles, and fish. Other protein sources included deer, elk, bear, wolf, beaver, wild turkey, duck and a variety of other small mammals and fowl. Presumably, the area that is now Rock Creek Park was once part of the expansive forest hunting grounds of this tribe and their neighbors in Northern Virginia.<sup>13</sup>

#### Settlement and Development of Towns in the Washington Area

The tide of European settlement along the tributaries of the Potomac and Patuxent waterways was slow but steady in the seventeenth century. For two decades after Fleet's journey to the Washington area, European traders continued to barter with tribes in the region and Indian contacts with hunters, missionaries, and colonial officials increased. Although European settlement of the present land area of Washington, D. C. did not begin until the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Within a generation an aggressive contingent of predominantly Scotch-Irish settlers had essentially displaced the Indian population of the area.<sup>14</sup>

The first land patent issued in Maryland within the present boundaries of the District of Columbia was that of Blue Plains conveyed by Lord Baltimore to George Thompson in 1662. Thompson subsequently obtained patents for

Duddington Manor, Duddington Pasture, and New Troy in 1664. His extensive holdings were situated on the north and south sides of the Anacostia River and covered 2,800 acres in southwest and southeast Washington, the Navy Yard, and a large tract north of the Capitol and the Library of Congress. Other early patents for lands in what became the core of the capital city were Francis Pope's Rome of 400 acres, Robert Troop's Scotland Yard of 500 acres, John Langworth's Widow's Mite of 600 acres, and John Meekes's Chicester of 400 acres.<sup>15</sup>

The private acquisition of land along Rock Creek began in 1688 when Henry Darnall obtained warrants for approximately 6,000 acres in the Washington metropolitan area, including Rock Creek Park and the Forest Glen, Silver Spring, and the Takoma communities. His 1,776 acre "Gyrle's Portion," included most of the property eventually condemned for Rock Creek Park. Darnall sold 705 acres of this land on the west side of Rock Creek to Ninian Beall in 1703. This land was renamed the "Rock of Dunbarton," and the greater portion of Georgetown was platted from this acreage. Daniel Carroll, one of the city's first commissioners, married Henry Darnall's daughter, Eleanor, acquired the Rock Creek lands, built a manor house at Forest Glen, Maryland, and thereafter was known as "Daniel Carroll of Rock Creek." With this title Carroll was differentiated from his nephew, Daniel Carroll of Duddington, whose extensive acreage became the modern day Capitol Hill neighborhood.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike many of the early patentees of Washington, Ninian Beall actually settled his claims. He was born in Largo, Fifeshire, Scotland in 1630 and became a junior officer (cornet) in the English-Scottish army raised in 1650 that opposed Oliver Cromwell. Beall was captured at the Battle of Dunbar by the Puritan army. For his role in the resistance, Beall was sentenced to five years of indentured servitude in the plantations and was sent to either Ireland or the West Indies. By 1652 there was record of him in Maryland where he served out his term of service with Calvert County planter and merchant Richard Hall. The middle-aged soldier received his freedom in 1668 and spent the remainder of his long life in military and public service in Maryland eventually attaining the rank of Colonel of Militia. Beall settled in the Washington area after obtaining a patent for a 1,503 tract of land in 1687 known as the "Inclosure." This property was located in southeast Washington and included the grounds of the National Arboretum. Soon thereafter he

obtained land on the eastern side of the Anacostia River which he called "Fife Enlarged." 17

Colonel Beall was an active promoter of settlement in "New Scotland," a hundred or subdivision of Charles County extending from Oxon Branch near Alexandria to the Falls of the Potomac. Maryland land records of this period refer to the Washington area as the "Frontier Plantations" or the "forest on the Potomac." Beall obtained warrants for thousands of acres in Upper Marlboro and managed several tobacco plantations in the Washington area. Beall may have been an early admirer of the natural beauty of Rock Creek because he made a concerted effort to acquire land in the area after 1703 even though he already held vast land patents in what today is southeast Washington and Prince Georges county in Maryland. He had commanded a garrison of Maryland Rangers from 1698 to 1704 stationed just below the Potomac Falls, whose duty it was to protect the settlers from Indian raids. Beall's patrols had taken him along Rock Creek and may have influenced his decision to acquire land along the waterway. His eldest son, George Beall, inherited the "Rock of Dunbarton" tract and younger sons, Thomas and Charles, also established plantations in the Washington area on land obtained for them by their father.<sup>18</sup>

Another early proprietor who played a pivotal figure in the settlement history of Washington was John Addison who purchased the 370 Guisborough tract in 1688. Originally granted to William Dent in 1663, this land became the site of Addison's plantation, which was situated on the south side of Eastern Branch (Anacostia River) near the mouth of the waterway. He also jointly owned a patent for White Haven, a 759 acre parcel of land in the hills northwest of Georgetown just below Little Falls inside the present District boundary. It was on this land that the Maryland Rangers garrison was built in 1693. Addison, like Beall, was a prominent figure in Maryland's colonial public and military service. He served as justice of the Provincial court, Privy Councillor to the Governor, Commissary General of the Prerogative Court, and as a militia Colonel in Prince George's county. It was in this latter role that Addison directed the construction of the Rangers's fort on his White Haven land. As the tide of settlement pushed the Potomac tribes westward, intertribal wars erupted between the Piscataway and the remnants of the Susquehannock who themselves had been pushed south by the Seneca. During the colonial period in Maryland, there were numerous conflicts between the

European settlers and Indian tribes. These troubles were largely agitated by the political turmoil of Indian territorial disputes and quarrels with white settlers over land use issues, such as grazing rights and tobacco farming.<sup>19</sup>

The Rangers patrolled the frontier from the Falls of the Potomac to the branches of Patuxent. Several brutal assaults and murders were recorded between 1692 to 1700, and occasional attacks on the garrison itself kept the Rangers alert. A particularly gruesome murder and the mutilation of two adults and five children on a farm in 1700 in what today is the Arlington area particularly shocked settlers on both sides of the Potomac River. As was usually the case, the murderers were not apprehended. News of atrocities of this sort evoked an irrational fear and suspicion of the Indian tribes in the region, particularly the Conoy who had intermittent political ties to the feared Iroquois. This frustration precipitated reprisals against tribal leaders and perpetuated a cycle of petty violence. By the end of the seventeenth century, both the Conoy and Algonquian tribal confederacies, which at the time of European contact had many villages in Virginia, the District of Columbia, and southern Maryland, had been displaced. A Conoy contingent relocated to western Pennsylvania. Yet dispersed groups remained and today descendants of the Piscataway tribe live in the Washington area.<sup>20</sup>

In 1698 Captain Richard Brightwell, the Rangers commander, died and the unit was reorganized under Colonel Ninian Beall's leadership. In a report submitted to the Maryland Council in 1699, Addison revealed that Beall's garrison strength was approximately 35 men who served at varying times of the year. Renegades continued to attack settlers, but the number of violent incidents perpetuated by the Indians decreased substantially by 1725. At the turn of the century, a smallpox epidemic significantly depleted the native population, and by 1708 the Maryland colonial government had disbanded the Rangers because it was believed the Potomac frontier was secure. Apparently, Rock Creek had been important to the Rangers for strategic reasons because of the important east-west trail crossings provided by the shallow fords of the creek. At least on one occasion Colonel Beall dispatched a report to the Maryland Council from Rock Creek, where he had observed an Indian hunting party. Beall was alarmed because he thought the band had ventured down from their usual hunting grounds in the mountains to foment an uprising. However, no attack stemmed from the visit.<sup>21</sup>

The Indians of the Potomac Valley had a profound influence on the white settlers. The early settlements owed their survival to Indian corn and trade with the tribes sustained the tide of immigration. As Frederick Gutheim observed: "Indian forms of agriculture, construction, and language, and even forms of government and oratory, were silently absorbed by white settlements all over the Americas. In the Potomac we can see the introduction of specific plants (corn and tobacco), new words (hominy, opossum, succotash, wigwam), and a new diet. From the first white settlement a new civilization began to be born."<sup>22</sup> By the early eighteenth century, the lessees and tenants and a few adventurous proprietors who had seated and worked the tobacco plantations in the region had been joined by wheat farmers, merchants, artisans, peddlers, and clerks.

A trading post was established in 1703 at what was then the navigable mouth of Rock Creek. This enterprise was built on the Georgetown side of the creek and was known as Saw Pit Landing. It was used as a shipping depot for hogsheads of tobacco moved seasonally from the fields to the dock across "rolling roads." Georgetown was formally platted as a town from sixty acres of land along the west side of Rock Creek in 1751. Similar landings were later built at Hunting Creek Warehouse in 1732. The infant community of Belhaven developed here before the area was planned as a town and renamed Alexandria in 1743. Garrison's Landing was opened in 1742 and later became the town of Bladensburg. Inspection and custom houses were soon built beside these wharfs. Since tobacco was the medium of exchange in this period by which taxes, church tithes, and financial obligations were paid and goods and services purchased, these trading posts emerged as the commercial core of what were in reality "paper towns" until the last quarter of the eighteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1740s and 1750s, the colonial governments of Virginia and Maryland sponsored fairs at Alexandria and Georgetown to encourage trade with and sales to backcountry farmers. These festive social and business events were possibly an early realization that the soils of the region would not indefinitely support a cash crop agriculture. By the mid-eighteenth century, a group of Virginia planters, most notably the Washington and Lee families, were actively promoting the Potomac River as a future link between the Atlantic seaboard and the Ohio Valley. So powerful was this infectious confidence in the future grandeur and economic potential of the region that it

has been dubbed "Potomac Fever" by one historian. Additional towns, such as Hamburg (1768) and Carrollsburg (1770), were platted in the area. Hamburg was located just east of Rock Creek in an area that today is the Foggy Bottom neighborhood. Carrollsburg was built on a neck of land east of Greenleaf's point on the northern bank of the Anacostia River at the site of the Army War College. Few houses or commercial buildings were erected in these towns, but Carrollsburg did develop into a relatively prosperous trading post by the later eighteenth century.<sup>24</sup>

George Washington became the champion of the dream to create a commercial emporium on the Potomac River. The fact that the national capital would be located just above Mount Vernon was in large measure because of Washington's obsession with the aesthetic, geopolitical, and economic potential of the site. After the Revolutionary War efforts to establish a major commercial center on the Potomac River gathered momentum owing to navigational improvements and canal construction on the upper reaches of the waterway accomplished by the Potomac Navigation Company. This private corporation was chartered by the states of Virginia and Maryland in 1784 with the urging of George Washington, who was a major shareholder in the company. Ultimately, a Potomac site for the capital was chosen by Congress. Washington's formidable influence and his conviction that the location would become a gateway to western expansion, as well as a key to national unity, proved to be decisive. However, it took years of deliberation and the defeat of many alternative site proposals before the dreamers garnered their prize.<sup>25</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century Georgetown and Alexandria had evolved into important ports. These towns flourished as shipping and receiving centers for the export of tobacco and wheat and for the import of goods from the Atlantic trade. The continued economic vitality of these burgeoning towns depended on improved access to the fertile farmlands of the western hinterlands. This factor motivated the continued construction of canals, turnpikes, and improvements to river navigation. Rock Creek provided the water power for the early grist and flour mills, foundries, forges, lime furnaces, and numerous other early industrial enterprises clustered at the stream's mouth at the lower end of Rock Creek that supported the thriving port of Georgetown.

In 1790 the land area of what would become Rock Creek Park remained in a relatively natural state. In fact, the overall land area selected for the

national capital, with the exception of Alexandria and Georgetown, remained predominantly woodland. The outstanding natural resource remained the Potomac fishery, which seasonally teemed with herring, shad, salmon, and sturgeon well into the nineteenth century. Shellfish, such as clams, crabs, and oysters, and birds, like turkeys, quail and other waterfowl, were also plentiful. Agricultural clearings dotted the landscape with log or frame houses with outbuildings and cabins for black farm workers. In the hills north of Georgetown on the road leading into Montgomery County were a few estates of the town's prominent families. A few wealthy planters, such as Daniel Carroll of Duddington and Anthony Holmead at Pleasant Plains had built substantial manor houses in the vicinity of what respectively today is Capitol Hill and Mount Pleasant. However, most of the landowners of the region were poor third generation farmers who lived on extensive acreage inherited from the original settlers. The creation of the Federal city provided them with an opportunity to improve their lot and many were eager to see their land become the seat of empire.<sup>26</sup>

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## CHAPTER II

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Robert L. Humphrey and Mary E. Chambers, Ancient Washington: American Indian Cultures of the Potomac Valley with an afterword by Stephen R. Potter, (Washington, D. C.: George Washington University, Washington Area Studies, 1985), pp. 7-10. The following summary of the prehistory of the Washington area has been largely derived from this archeological monograph.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-16, 37; see also Stephen R. Potter, Piney Branch Quarry Site Nomination Form, 1982, Copy on file at the National Register of Historic Places, Washington, D. C.; for analysis of the other two Archaic sites in Rock Creek Park, see also Paul Y. Inashima, An Archeological Investigation of Thirty-One Erosion Control and Bank Stabilization Sites Along Rock Creek and Its Tributaries. (Seneca, Md: United States Department of the Interior, Denver Service Center Northeast Team, 1985), pp. 129-160 and 199-234.

<sup>3</sup>Humphrey and Chambers, Ancient Washington, pp. 17-18 and 38.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>For a biography of John Smith and a discussion of scholarly interpretation of his works, see Philip L. Barbour, The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith (Boston, 1964); and for an annotated version of Smith's A Map of Virginia, see Philip L. Barbour, ed., The Complete Works of John Smith (1580-1631), 3 vols., (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), I: pp. 135-177.

<sup>6</sup>See Humphreys and Chambers, Ancient Washington, pp. 18-26; Inashima, An Archeological Investigation ... Rock Creek and Its Tributaries, pp. 46-51; J. Walter Fewkes, ed., "The Aborigines of the District of Columbia," in John C. Proctor, ed., Washington Past and Present, Volume I, (New York: Lewis Publishing Co., 1930), pp. 7-11; Guy Castle, "The Washington Area between 1608 and 1708, with a Biographical Note on Prince George of Denmark," Records of the Columbia Historical Society, 63-65 (1963-1965), pp. 1-18; S. V. Proudfit, "Aboriginal Occupancy of the District of Columbia," Records of the Columbia Historical Society, 25 (1923), pp. 182-193; and Ainsworth R. Spofford, "The Coming of the White Man, and the Founding of the National Capital," in William V. Cox, comp., Celebration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Establishment of the Seat of Government in the District of Columbia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), pp. 221-236.

<sup>7</sup>Humphreys and Chambers, Ancient Washington, pp. 18-26; see also Bessie Wilmarth Gahn's description of Fleet in the introduction to Original Patenttees of Land at Washington Prior to 1700, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 8-9.

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<sup>8</sup>William Tindall, Standard History of the City of Washington (Knoxville, Tenn.: H. W. Crew & Co., 1914), p. 15.

<sup>9</sup>Humphreys and Chambers, Ancient Washington, pp. 18-26; Inashima, An Archeological Investigation of ... Rock Creek and Its Tributaries, pp. 46-51.

<sup>10</sup>In addition to the sources cited in note 10, see Frederick Gutheim's sketch of Fleet in The Potomac (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1968 reprint edition), pp. 26-33.

<sup>11</sup>This famous passage has been reprinted by many scholars from Fleet's "A brief journal of a voyage Made in the Bark "Warwicke" to Virginia and other parts of the continent of America," published in Edward D. Neill's Founders of Maryland (Albany: 1871).

<sup>12</sup>Gutheim, The Potomac, pp. 26-33.

<sup>13</sup>Humphreys and Chambers, Ancient Washington, pp. 24-25; and Inashima, An Archeological Investigation of ... Rock Creek and Its Tributaries, pp. 46-51.

<sup>14</sup>Humphreys and Chambers, Ancient Washington, pp. 27-30.

<sup>15</sup>For a description of these landowners and their patents, see Gahn, Original Patentees of Land at Washington Prior to 1700, pp. 14-39.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 33, 36-38; see also Bryan, A History of the National Capital, Volume I, 1790-1814, pp. 49, 120-122.

<sup>17</sup>Beall had a striking physical presence because of his bright red hair and, for his time, a giant's height of six feet seven inches. He was a devout Presbyterian and considered the "nucleus of Presbyterianism in Maryland during the last quarter of the seventeenth century." He died at the age of ninety-two. Beall's colorful life is discussed in Gahn, Original Patentees of Land at Washington Prior to 1700, pp. 36-38; William B. Bryan's "The Beginnings of the Presbyterian Church in the District of Columbia," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 8 (1905), pp. 43-44; "The Mystery of Ninian Beall's Burial Place Remains Unsolved," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 42-43 (1940-1941), pp. 161-167; and Hugh T. Taggart, "Old Georgetown," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 11 (1908), pp. 120-224.

<sup>18</sup>Castle, "The Washington Area between 1608 and 1708, with a Biographical Note on Prince George of Denmark," pp. 1-18; and Gahn, Original Patentees of Land at Washington Prior to 1700, pp. 36-38. See also Walter Muir Whitehill, Dumbarton Oaks: The History of a Georgetown House and Garden, 1800-1966. (Cambridge, Mass., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 1-10.

<sup>19</sup>Castle, "The Washington Area between 1608 and 1708, with a Biographical Note on Prince George of Denmark," pp. 4-12; Humphreys and

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Chambers, Ancient Washington, pp. 26-28; Inashima, An Archeological Investigation of ... Rock Creek and Its Tributaries, pp. 46-51.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Gutheim, The Potomac, p. 22.

23 Taggart, "Old Georgetown," pp. 120-224; Bryan, A History of the National Capital, Volume I, 1790-1814. (New York: MacMillan Co., 1914), pp. 55-60.; Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation, pp. 15-16 and 21-22.

24 Bryan, History of the National Capitol, Vol. I: pp. 59-60; see also a recent monograph on this subject by Kenneth R. Bowling, Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever, (Washington, D. C.: The American Institute of Architects Press, 1988).

25 See Bowling, Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever, especially pp. 39-60.

26 For the natural history of Washington in this period, see Waldo L. McAtee, A Sketch of the Natural History of the District of Columbia. (Washington, D.C.: Bulletin of the Biological Society of Washington, No. 1, 1918), pp. 5-14; and for summary of the natural resources, economic, and social conditions at the time of L'Enfant's 1791 survey, see Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation, pp. 19-24.

## CHAPTER III

"Rock Creek in Olden Days"

The Historical Development of the Land Area of Rock Creek Park, 1790-1890.

The frontispiece to Washington and Its Romance (1923), by author and diplomat Thomas Nelson Page, was a color lithograph depicting a well-dressed belle and beau strolling along a shimmering "Rock Creek in Olden Days." The artist embellished the natural setting of the park by adding imaginary stone walks, ornamental flowers, retaining walls, and the outline of a gazebo to the background. The couple were dressed in a fashion dating to the mid-nineteenth century, although the actual text of Page's popular history chronicled the development of the region from European contact until 1812.<sup>1</sup> What the imagined view of Rock Creek in Page's book reflected was the emergence of a strong historical romanticism in depictions of the waterway by the early 1920s. The natural beauty of Rock Creek, the prime factor behind the creation of the park, had long been revered. British ambassador Lord James Bryce's now famous remark in his book The National Capital (1913) exemplified the traditional strain of natural romanticism associated with writings about the park:

To Rock Creek there is nothing comparable in any capital city in Europe. What city in the world is there where a man living in a house like that in which we are meeting, in 18th Street, can within less than ten minutes by car and within a quarter of an hour on his own feet get into a beautiful rocky glen, such as you would find in the woods of Maine or Scotland--a winding, rocky glen, with a broad stream foaming over its stony bed and wild leafy woods looking down on each side, where you have a carriage road at the bottom, but an inexhaustible variety of footpaths, where you can force your way through thickets and test your physical ability in climbing up and down steep slopes, and in places scaling the faces of bold cliffs, all that you have in Rock Creek Park.<sup>2</sup>

By 1930 historical nostalgia also became a frequent component of heavily illustrated promotional travel articles, such as "A Playground as God Made It," "Rock Creek Park as a Holiday Haunt," and "Rock Creek Park-- A Fairy Princess."<sup>3</sup> A common theme in tourist literature was the concept that the park "boasted a history as intriguing as its beauty." The park's late

eighteenth and nineteenth century history was represented by its "relics." Pierce Mill, the Pierce-Klinge house, Fort DeRussy, and the "adopted" Joaquin Miller cabin, moved into the park in 1912, served as tangible reminders of the industry of our forefathers, the gentility of an earlier age, the drama of the Civil War, and the moral lesson of a legendary poet's simple lifestyle.<sup>4</sup> It was an idealized past that represented the park as unspoiled natural wilderness dotted with a few picturesque historic sites. In reality the social and economic forces that shaped Rock Creek Park's physical development between 1790 and 1890 created a rural landscape with many buildings and man-made spaces.

The Rock Creek Board of Control, the first managers of the park, were by necessity pragmatic and parsimonious. Limited appropriations for park improvements by Congress strongly influenced their decision-making, which was guided by the primary mission of enhancement of the natural beauty of the park. On the other hand, public uses of the park often necessitated the selection and adaption of nineteenth century buildings and landscape elements for recreational purposes. By World War I, adaptive use firmly integrated many older buildings, structures, and sites into the fabric of the park landscape. This chapter will focus on the historic land uses of Rock Creek Park in the nineteenth century and will also describe the development of the area before its public acquisition.<sup>5</sup>

### Rock Creek in the L'Enfant-Ellicott Plan for the National Capital

With the enactment of the Residence Act in July, 1790, George Washington's dream of the establishment of a national capital on a Potomac River site became a reality. Yet, it would take another decade of negotiations, surveys, mapping, planning, and construction before the infant city became the seat of federal government, and another century before the capital acquired the physical size to suggest it might fulfill Washington's expectations or to match the scale planned for by Pierre Charles L'Enfant. The eccentric French engineer and architect's career and the fate of his famous city plan of 1791 need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the scale and vision of grand radiating avenues focused on the erection of major public buildings and monuments, the nodal distribution of sites for educational, commercial, and social centers, and the integration of canals, gardens, parks, promenades, and

the famous Mall esplanade proposed an urban landscape unique to North America at this time. L'Enfant's plan fired the imagination of President Washington, and his acceptance and support of this bold scheme is today considered a legacy to the nation.<sup>6</sup>

L'Enfant's rough masterpiece of a city plan was translated by Andrew Ellicott into the engraved "Plan of the City of Washington in the Territory of Columbia, 1792." From this famous map can be discerned the intended outline for Washington City, nestled between the Potomac River and Eastern Branch (Anacostia River). The site was an attractive basin of river meadows and tidal marshes ringed by an amphitheater of hills, and not the fetid swamp so often described in today's popular histories and tourist literature. The watercourses of lower Rock Creek and the Eastern Branch formed natural boundaries on the west and east and eventually a roadway, which became known as Boundary Street (today Florida Avenue), was built on the alignment of the northern limits of the planned city. The land area acquired for Rock Creek Park was located northwest and well beyond the planned urban center situated in a political division known as Washington County. It formed part of the surrounding hills, conceived by L'Enfant as the natural frame for his formally designed city.<sup>7</sup>

Andrew Ellicott, the talented surveyor and astronomer who rescued the plan of Washington after L'Enfant's dismissal for procrastination and insubordination, was initially charged with the responsibility of surveying and delineating the boundaries of the ten mile square area of the District of Columbia. In his capacity as District surveyor, Ellicott directed the placement and erection of boundary stones in 1793. One of these geodetic markers, the Northwest No. 9 milestone, still stands approximately fifty yards northeast of the junction of Western and Oregon Avenues just outside of Rock Creek Park. In 1794 the results of Ellicott's survey were distributed to the public in the form of an engraved map of the new District of Columbia. The map delineated the boundary lines, mile post locations, major roads, watercourses, existing and proposed settlements, and the region's general topographic features. All subsequent topographical maps were based on Ellicott's work, and this engraved topographical plan remained the official printed map of the District of Columbia until it was superseded by Albert Boschke's topographical studies published in 1861.<sup>8</sup>

The land area of Rock Creek Park was recorded on Ellicott's remarkable work of cartography. From this map it can be discerned that innumerable spring-fed tributaries once flowed into Rock Creek, which have since been filled or converted into underground sewer lines. Only Piney and Broad branches remain open streams. The map also depicts Rock Creek's outlet into the Potomac River, which was once crowded with the masts of ocean and river trading craft. At the time of Ellicott's survey, the creek was navigable as far as the vicinity of P Street. An effort was made to protect the creek in 1792 when the Maryland legislature passed a law forbidding erection of weirs or hedges in the stream within two miles of the Potomac River. However, the reclamation of land, the construction of bridges at M Street (1788) and K Street (1792), and in all likelihood the transfer of tons of silt and sand from agricultural and construction activities upstream slowly constricted the navigability of the creek. In the 1830s the construction of a quay across Rock Creek for the operation of the Chesapeake and Ohio canal essentially ended the use of the creek's mouth for a harbor. Eventually, all evidence of the stream's broad outlet was obliterated by further land reclamation and today it is virtually the same width as that of the creek miles upstream.<sup>9</sup>

Another interesting feature of Ellicott's topographical map was the delineation of the major roads in the Rock Creek Valley. The "Road to Frederick" on the west side of the creek and the "Rock Creek Road" on the east side of the waterway clearly bypassed the rushing waters and ravines that formed a formidable natural barrier to travel and settlement in this sector of the "Territory of Columbia." Each road skirted the ground either east or west of the creek and its tributaries to avoid the impediment of seasonally dangerous water crossings. Soon after establishment of the national capital major roads were built to the east of Rock Creek which accessed the markets of the new city. By 1830 major turnpikes into Maryland were linked to extensions of 7th and 14th streets. The "Road to Frederick" was superseded by the Georgetown and Rockville Road, and remained an important thoroughfare into the late nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup>

#### The Settlement of Upper Rock Creek Before the Civil War

In 1890 the largest landholder of the land area proposed for Rock Creek Park was Pierce Shoemaker. He owned approximately a quarter of the total

acreage eventually purchased for the new park. Shoemaker had inherited the estate from his uncle Abner C. Pierce, son of Isaac Pierce. Born in Chester County, Pennsylvania on April 9, 1756, the son of Quaker parents George Pearce and Ann Gaines, Isaac Pierce came to the Washington area sometime prior to 1790. Here he met and subsequently married Elizabeth (Betsy) Cloud, the daughter of Georgetown miller Abner Cloud. The couple eventually had nine children, born between 1780 and 1797. Cloud operated Edes Mill located on the Potomac near the Chesapeake & Ohio canal approximately one-half mile east of Chain Bridge. In 1794 Isaac Pierce acquired a 150-acre parcel of land called the "Gift." The land was sold to him by Georgetown merchant and real estate speculator William Deakins. The property included a house, dependencies, and a mill. The mill building was located on an adjacent ten acre tract and was also conveyed to Pierce in the purchase agreement. From this parcel, Isaac Pierce built an important estate. By the time of his death in 1841, he owned more than 1,200 acres in northwest Washington.<sup>11</sup>

Other early nineteenth century landowners of note in the lower neck of land that forms the southern tip of Rock Creek Park included Thomas Blagden and General Hiram Walbridge. Their farms overlapped the park area on the east side of Rock Creek and have since developed into the Mount Pleasant and Crestwood neighborhoods in northwest Washington. Before the Civil War, the land that became Rock Creek Park which was not owned by Pierce or these men was largely uncultivated or uninhabited. A few farmers, such as Jacob Hoyle, J. Moreland, Frederick Titnam, and James Pilling, had small land parcels on the east side of Rock Creek between what today are Military and Sherrill Roads.

The Hoyle farmhouse was located near the present site of the Miller Cabin, and the Morelands lived in a dwelling in the vicinity of the present Rock Creek golfcourse clubhouse. Titnam and Pilling had farmland that overlapped the present park boundaries and their houses were approximately one-half mile northeast of Hoyle's homestead. The upper reaches of the park were owned by the heirs of prosperous dry goods merchant Darius Claggett and colonial proprietor Daniel Carroll. The Claggetts cleared an area west of what today is the intersection of Beach and Sherrill Drives and built a structure in this clearing, possibly a barn to provide shelter in a grazing pasture. The building was an appreciable distance southwest of the Claggett farmstead, which was oriented toward the Seventh Street turnpike (Georgia

Avenue) and located in what is today Shepherd Park. Other than this clearing and the Hoyle and Moreland farms, the northern half of Rock Creek Park in 1861 was a predominantly wooded landscape.<sup>12</sup>

The Pierce family erected the most substantial enclave of buildings in the southern half of Rock Creek Park, portions of which remain extant today. The original Pierce dwelling and its two immediate dependencies were located about one-quarter mile west of Pierce Mill, a land area occupied today by the Czechoslovakian Embassy compound just south of Tilden Street. By the late 1850s eleven buildings were standing at the Pierce farmstead just west of Rock Creek off Pierce's Mill Road. Two buildings, a springhouse (1801) and the potato house (1804) were sited north of the homestead and flanked Pierce's Mill Road. North of the main road was a cow barn (ca. 1810). Clustered near the creek were Pierce Mill (1829), a saw mill (ca. 1800; rebuilt 1865; razed 1907), and a carriage house (ca. 1810). At a point nearly equidistant between the farmhouse and the mills to the south of Pierce's Mill Road were the miller's house (ca. 1820) and a distillery (1811).<sup>13</sup>

Of the eleven Pierce farm buildings recorded by the 1861 Boschke topographical map of Washington, D. C., three are extant within Rock Creek Park. These include the springhouse, carriage house (art barn), and Pierce mill. The Pierce Shoemaker house called "Cloverdale," built in the 1870s, is located on a promontory west of Pierce Mill overlooking Rock Creek. This structure replaced the orginal Pierce farmhouse razed by Shoemaker in 1876. A stone cottage on Shoemaker Street dated 1811 also stands just outside the park boundary and was originally the distillery. It was used a barn in the late nineteenth century before its conversion in 1916 to a residence. The potato house, sawmill, miller's house, and cow barn have been razed. All of the extant stone farm buildings were constructed by Isaac Pierce and his son Abner out of blue-grey and brown granite. The stone was probably extracted from quarries owned by the Pierce family and located along Broad Branch or on the east side of Rock Creek at the mouth of Piney Branch just above Klingle Road.<sup>14</sup>

The Pierces built their farm buildings in a consistent manner, in terms of both design and materials. These agricultural buildings were conservative in form and architectural detail and resembled classically inspired building types commonly found in the Mid-Atlantic region. Although Isaac Pierce's parents were English, he was born and raised in Pennsylvania, and he undoubtedly admired and imitated building practices brought to that colony by

German settlers. Primly symmetrical and solid in their granite construction, these conservative buildings were erected as permanent fixtures on the landscape and bear Pierce's mark B. I. P. and the date of construction. Today the structures remain rare examples of early nineteenth century vernacular stone construction in the District of Columbia. Pierce Mill's architectural significance is further enhanced by the fact that it is the only extant mill in the city, a once common building type along Rock Creek and the Chesapeake and Ohio canal.

A further indication of Isaac Pierce's prosperity as a land proprietor and farmer can be gauged by the number of slaves he owned. The 1820 U. S. Census reports that Pierce had eleven slaves: three adult males, two adult females, and five boys and six girls under the age of fourteen. This census data suggests that Pierce supported two slave families who worked as house servants, mill workers, and field hands. By 1840, a year before his death, Isaac Pierce had fourteen slaves, a moderate working force given the fact that many were children. The total slave population in the entire county of Washington in that year was 812.<sup>15</sup>

In January, 1842, Abner C. Pierce (1785-1851) inherited his father's farm. Little is known about Abner, the eldest son, other than the facts that he was born in Pennsylvania in 1795 and worked as a farmer and stonemason. The 1850 census recorded that the farm he had inherited from his father remained a prosperous concern. It included 80 acres of "improved" land and 880 "unimproved" acres of woodland and pasture. From the special census schedules of that year, it can be discerned that Abner Pierce owned two horses, three mules, five milk cows, four oxen, 50 sheep, and 19 swine. Pierce's farm had produced 200 bushels of wheat and 150 bushels of corn, which in all likelihood were grist into flour and meal at the mill. Pierce also produced small quantities of rye, oats, and garden vegetables. In addition, the 1850 census indicated that he owned fourteen slaves: four male and two female adults and nine children. His nephew Pierce Shoemaker (1818-1891), also lived and worked at the farm in that year. After his uncle's death in 1851, Shoemaker inherited the farm and implements, furniture, and other possessions worth more than \$30,000.<sup>16</sup>

In 1860 Pierce Shoemaker was the owner of the old Pierce farm and maintained a household that consisted of himself, his wife Martha Carberry Shoemaker, his sons Louis and David (aged four and two respectively), and his

daughters, Mary aged two and seven-month old baby Clara. He was a bearded man with an aristocratic bearing who it was noted bore a striking resemblance to General Robert E. Lee. Shoemaker was the son of Abner's younger sister Abigail who had married a naval officer. He was educated at Georgetown College and married Washington belle Martha Carberry. In 1860 Shoemaker employed a nurse named Catherine Murry and a farmhand named Francis Young, both natives of Ireland, who presumably lived on the estate. Shoemaker also owned twenty slaves before an act of Congress of April 16, 1862 abolished slavery in the District of Columbia.<sup>17</sup>

The patriarch Isaac Pierce provided generously for his eighth child and youngest son, Joshua (1795-1869). In 1823 Pierce gave Joshua 82 acres of land adjacent and south of his own farm, and probably helped build his stone mansion, the core of a second major complex of buildings erected in Rock Creek Park by the Pierce family. The main house and its paired dependencies share qualities of design, materials, and construction technique similar to that of Isaac Pierce's mill. The conservative Georgian form and architectural detail, influenced by Pennsylvania German building types, the solid irregularly coursed granite walls, and massive stone lintels and sills all impart the same confident vernacular architectural expression evident at Pierce Mill.

The 1861 Boschke map records that the Joshua Pierce estate consisted of eight buildings placed on a designed naturalistic landscape. The first buildings erected were the large three and one-half story stone Georgian I-house, its Palladian-inspired paired dependencies, and the carriage house. In 1843 a matching one-story addition was made to the west side of the house. Later a two-story projecting front gabled pavilion with corner wall buttresses was added to the north elevation. This later addition to the house was probably attached to the house in 1866 and may have served two purposes: to reorient what was considered the front of the house from the south to the north, and to update the building's architectural style.

A greenhouse was also built between the paired dependencies behind a stone retaining wall. The structure used this terrace wall to support a glass shed roof, and it probably had been constructed in the original 1823 building campaign. Boschke presented the greenhouse as part of a large U-shaped structure south of the house, possibly to impart the information that the dependencies and greenhouse functioned as one unit. Further south of the main house were a spring house and barn and in the southwest corner of the estate

was a large outbuilding, which may have been used as a gate house. In addition, there were outbuildings situated just northwest of the house. These structures were removed by 1866. Four of the eight buildings recorded by Boshke remain extant, the main house, carriage house, and paired potting shed and utility house.<sup>18</sup>

Joshua Pierce was born in the District of Columbia in 1795 and was educated in Rockville, Maryland and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He married Susan Ann Coates (1794 -1861) of Philadelphia. Although the couple died childless, Joshua Pierce's love of children has often been noted by writers as the reason he left substantial acreage in northwest Washington to a public charity to establish an orphanage. His appearance was described as "being below medium height and stout" with "an intelligent and benevolent face." An undated photograph of Joshua Pierce was published by local historian John Clagett Proctor in 1945. The image revealed a dour and scholarly man with huge mutton chop sideburns and a balding pate who looked every bit the stereotypical Victorian gentleman. Highly respected in Washington and considered a man of artistic taste and intellectual attainment, Pierce led an active social life. He was purportedly a congenial host who frequently entertained political luminaries of the period, such as John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, and Daniel Webster.<sup>19</sup>

The original name for the Pierce estate was "Lee Rig." It was later changed to "Linnaean Hill" in honor of the famous Swedish botanist Carl von Linne, inventor of the system of binomial nomenclature for biological species. Since Joshua Pierce was the first person to operate a general nursery in the District of Columbia, the impetus for the name change to "Linnaean Hill" may have been a dignified, but calculated, advertisement for the developing nurseries on the property. Pierce soon made Linnaean Hill a thriving concern. The nurseries at his estate and at a fifty four acre parcel of land on squares in northwest Washington between Fourteenth and Sixteenth and R and S Streets made Pierce a wealthy man. At his death in 1869 his estate was valued at \$150,000, and the inventory of his personal possessions and cash roughly totaled more than \$23,000.<sup>20</sup>

Census records track the economic vitality of Linnaean Hill and provide additional insight into the character of the property between 1830 and 1860. In 1830 Joshua Pierce lived with his wife and a teenage male, presumably a relative in their care. In addition, six slaves and two freeman probably resided

on the estate. Five of the slaves were males aged between 24 and 36 and one was a young female aged between 10 and 24. In 1840 thirteen slaves and one freeman were recorded by the census enumerator at the Linnaean Hill estate. The 1850 census recorded Pierce's occupation as "Farmer and Nurseryman" and valued his property at \$15,000. His household consisted of his wife and his six-year old nephew Joshua Pierce Klingle. At this time Pierce owned ten slaves: four adult males, one adult female, one boy, and four girls. In 1860 Joshua Pierce's occupation was listed in the census as a "Horticulturalist" with real property that had sharply escalated in value to \$90,000 and personal property worth \$12,500. His wife Susan and nephew, now identified as a nurseryman, were still members of the household. Also living at the estate were two black farmhands, 38 year-old George Jones and twenty-three year old George Rusty.<sup>21</sup>

Special census schedules for 1860 indicate that Joshua Pierce had a thriving "market garden" worth \$4,000. This category of the census undoubtedly referred to the value of his nurseries. His livestock included six horses, two mules, four milk cows, four oxen, and nine swine. Pierce also produced forty bushels of rye, and 200 bushels each of corn and oats in 1860. Beans, potatoes, butter, honey, and wine were also recorded as agricultural products.<sup>22</sup> Joshua Pierce's principal business, of course, was the propagation and sale of fruit and ornamental trees, flowers, shrubs, and other plant materials used in landscaping streets, suburban estates, and parks. Pierce provided botanical specimens for the grounds of the Executive Mansion, the U. S. Capitol grounds, and many of the city's other government parks and reservations. In the role of horticulturalist Pierce gained particular notoriety in the region for his cultivation of camellias, which were exceptionally rare in his time. The flowers drew large crowds to his estate to view or buy the blossoms and to enjoy a carriage ride or stroll through the grounds. As early as 1825 Pierce had agents in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Fredericktown, Rockville, and Leesburg accepting orders for his business. A catalogue of plant specimens was prepared and regularly published thereafter.<sup>23</sup>

Little is known of the layout and design of Joshua Pierce's estate before 1856-1857, the period in which field data for the 1861 Boshke map was gathered. However, the Palladian influence in the siting of the dependencies suggests that the grounds may originally have had a formal character. By the late 1850s Linnaean Hill was considered a gem of picturesque landscape

gardening art. Undoubtedly, Pierce had been influenced by Andrew Jackson Downing, the leading American horticulturalist of his day. The New York nurseryman, landscape gardener, and writer met a tragic death in a riverboat accident at the height of his fame in 1852. His books, entitled Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America (1841), and Cottage Residences; or a Series of Designs for Rural Cottages and Cottage Villas and their Gardens and Grounds (1844) were particularly influential in promoting a "modern" style in the design of suburban or country houses and their landscapes. Central to Downing's naturalistic design philosophy was the concept that the architecture and landscape should conform to the character of the site. As a professional horticulturalist Pierce must have been cognizant of Downing's theories, and it is likely that he subscribed to the journal the Horticulturalist, edited by the pioneer landscape architect in 1846-47. Moreover, Downing worked in Washington delineating an 1851 master plan for the Mall and designing and laying out the grounds for three local villas.<sup>24</sup>

The 1861 Boshke illustrated the layout of the buildings, an orchard, and the circulation system employed by Pierce in the design of his estate grounds. In 1866 Major Nathaniel Michler also recorded the Pierce property in a topographical survey of northwest Washington. This map accompanied Michler's famous report to Congress in 1867 advocating the creation of a public park in the Rock Creek Valley, and proposing several new site for the Executive Mansion, one of which was on Meridian Hill. Michler's map reveals a particularly detailed outline of the site configuration of all buildings, the network of tree lined drives and paths, copses, and major landscape features.<sup>25</sup>

The map reveals that the outlines and sites of the extant house, paired dependencies, and carriage house/garage are essentially the same as they are today. Five additional outbuildings, which are no longer extant, are also illustrated on the map. Of these buildings only two were not recorded by Boschke in his 1856-1859 surveys. The first new building was a large structure located directly southwest of the extant carriage house/garage, possibly used as a stable. A second large building was also constructed directly north across from the barn so that the structures flanked a curving roadway which ran across the southern half of the property. The Michler map also depicted the

network of driveways and prominent landscape features in greater detail than Boschke's antebellum map.

The overall character of the property was that of a small picturesque park. Pierce had a well established nursery and arboretum on his estate by 1857, so it appears the extensive system of drives were built for carriage rides through the property to examine the fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs on the grounds. The 1892 USGS topographical maps indicate that the property retained the general appearance recorded by Michler's survey team until the government acquired 31 acres of the northern half the estate for present day Rock Creek Park.<sup>26</sup>

The only other person to own a substantial complex of buildings before the Civil War in the land area of what today is Rock Creek Park was lumber merchant Thomas Blagden (1815-1870). Blagden bought his farm in 1853 and became the proprietor of a 375 acre tract adjacent to Pierce Shoemaker's land largely on the east side of Rock Creek.<sup>27</sup> On this land, valued at \$150,000 in 1860, was a profitable flour and fertilizer mill complex. The "Argyle" or Blagden Mill was built prior to 1850, and by the eve of the Civil War had developed into a five building complex, including two mills, a miller's cottage, and two outbuildings. The complex was located approximately one-half mile north of Pierce Mill on Rock Creek at a site just below the present location of Boulder Bridge. The Blagden farmstead was located about one-half mile southeast of the mill in what today is the Crestwood neighborhood. The main house was a large frame Georgian house located at Varnum and Eighteenth Streets which was demolished in the 1930s. In 1860 the Blagden household consisted of Thomas, his wife Laura, his teenage daughters Mary and Harriet, and his boys, Tillman and Thomas, Jr. The Blagdens had a large contingent of servants, including a white housekeeper from Rhode Island and free blacks who served as domestics and farmhands.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to wealthy landed gentry like the Pierces, Shoemakers, and Blagdens, there also a few farmers such as Jacob Hoyle, James Pilling, J. Moreland, and, Frederick Titnam who owned more modest parcels of land above Military Road in the northern section of the park. These men also cultivated fields and raised families along the banks of Rock Creek. Hoyle's farmstead was representative of the more common pattern of agricultural land use and social status of farmers in Washington County during the antebellum period. He had settled along the eastern bank of Rock Creek just below the

Milk House Ford Road by at least 1830. The census of that year recorded that his household included himself, his wife, four children, a fifteen year old female slave, and a thirty-six year old freeman. The 1850 census listed his occupation as "Farmer" and also noted that he was born in Maryland and was illiterate. His wife Sarah and now four adult children also lived on the 100 acre farm, which was valued at \$3,000. There were no slaves or farmhands recorded by the census in 1850. In that year Hoyle owned three horses and three milk cows and produced fifty bushels of wheat and one hundred and fifty bushels of corn. He also cultivated garden vegetables for his table and most likely sold surplus produce at Washington's market. By 1860 Hoyle and his wife were advanced in age and lived alone. The farm's value had decreased to \$2,000.<sup>29</sup>

The Hoyle farmstead is depicted on the Boshke map as consisting of two buildings in a clearing. They were probably a modest frame or log house and a barn. Hewn log buildings were commonly built in Rock Creek Valley in the nineteenth century. The land acquisition records for Rock Creek Park contain reference to an "old dwelling house of logs and weatherboards" constructed in the 1840s on land owned by Alida C. Brown, who owned the tract identified as the land of the Carroll heirs on the Boshke map. A photograph taken in the park in 1902 illustrated an unidentified single-pen cabin with log walls hewn square with V-notching, a common folk building of the Mid-Atlantic region. The original Isaac Pierce house, demolished in 1876 by his grandson, was also constructed of hewn logs.<sup>30</sup>

### The Milling Industry Along Rock Creek

Pierce Mill today stands as the only building of its type in the District of Columbia. Yet, in the first half of the nineteenth century at least eight mills were built along Rock Creek from Georgetown to the District boundary. Many others operated on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and other tributaries in the region. Pierce Mill stands as an architectural testament to the constructive ability of Isaac Pierce as a vernacular craftsman and is historically significant as a lone survivor of the watermills, which once made a vital contribution to the economic growth of the District of Columbia.

The milling industry and its variety of products, such as paper, flour, fertilizer, and cut timber, flourished along Rock Creek in the first half of the nineteenth century. These industrial enterprises were built in the late

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and grew in proportion to the development of Georgetown and Washington City. The watermills built on Rock Creek within the boundaries of the District of Columbia included Lyons (ca. 1780), Deakins (pre-1794), Columbian (pre-1800), Parrott (pre-1800), Argyle (pre-1850), and the Pierce (1829), complexes.<sup>31</sup>

The Lyons Mill was probably built by partners, Pigman and Crow, in 1780 just across Rock Creek from Oak Hill Cemetery. In 1795 the property was acquired by Joseph Rowles, who operated the mill under the name Federal Mills. By the mid-nineteenth century the mill, which produced flour was commonly referred to as Lyons Mill. The Rowles heirs sold the mill property in 1811 to a small group of investors, including John Kurtz and John Lyons, who apparently administered its operations. At the time the mill ceased operation in 1875, it was under the sole proprietorship of Evan Lyons. Lyons was the miller at this facility for more than 30 years. The mill was used for barn dances and other social occasions in the late nineteenth century and remained a popular picnic spot until the 1910s. In 1913 the mill collapsed and its ruins were subsequently removed for road and trail construction.<sup>32</sup>

The Columbian Mill was believed to have been built by Georgetown merchant and real estate speculator Benjamin Stoddert before 1800. Stoddert was one of George Washington's agents who aided the president in his negotiations with land proprietors in the region and was the first secretary of the Navy. It was purchased by John Quincy Adams in 1825 and thereafter became known as the "Adams" mill. The property was located on the National Zoological grounds on the east bank of Rock Creek, about 700 feet south of a distinctive sharp bend in the waterway. After a checkered career the flour mill ceased its business operations around 1867. Michler's map depicted the complex as intact and identified it as "Columbia Mills." The building soon fell into ruins and was removed during the development of the zoo grounds in the 1890s.<sup>33</sup>

Little is known about the remaining mills, with the exception of the Pierce and Blagden (Argyle) concerns which were actually located within the boundary of modern day Rock Creek Park. The Deakins Mill was purchased by Isaac Pierce in 1794, and it was replaced by the present stone structure in the 1820s. Richard Parrott owned a woolen mill that operated briefly in the early nineteenth century. It was located at the northeast corner of Q and Twenty-seventh streets, and the building's walls were visible as late as 1927. The

Patterson or Paper Mill was erected by Gustavus Scott and Nicholas Lingan about 1800. The mill manufactured writing paper, and in 1820 was operated by Edgar Patterson. According to the U. S. census of manufacturers in that year the mill had two engines and two vats, half of which were in operation. The mill employed six men, twelve women, and two boys and was valued at \$30,000. The three-story mill ceased operations in the 1820s and was extant until about 1868. It was located on the west bank of Rock Creek in the vicinity of the P Street bridge.<sup>34</sup>

The final two mills located in the Rock Valley of the District of Columbia were those owned by Thomas Blagden and Isaac Pierce. The Blagden complex was named the "Argyle" Mill after the old land patent name on which it was built. Blagden purchased the property in 1853 and leased it to German miller Charles W. Floecker or paid him to operate the facility. Since the 1860 and 1870 census schedules record Floecker as working at the mill, the agreement between owner and miller must have been mutually beneficial in this period. In 1880 Charles Gaskins was operating the Argyle Mill, which by that time had fallen on hard times. In 1860 the mill produced 4,200 barrels of flour valued at \$24,000. By 1870 the mill's production of flour and meal had doubled to \$44,095. By 1880 its economic decline was readily apparent in the gross production value, which had plummeted to \$11,100.<sup>35</sup> Another indication of the mill's business decline was the fact that its operations entailed entirely custom grinding. The mill ground wheat, rye, or corn for the customer's personal use or sale, rather than the merchant production of larger bulk quantities of flour or meal for wholesale dealers. These figures are not surprising given the fact that by 1880, the industry of flour milling had been transformed by the introduction of new processing methods, advanced technology, and rail transportation.

The appearance of Blagden Mill was recorded in a historic photograph of the property taken in the 1890s. From this view it can be discerned that the grist mill had a marked similarity with Pierce Mill in its symmetrical Georgian design and solid stone construction. Apparently, the mill ceased operations in the early 1880s and was severely damaged by the famous 1889 Johnstown flood. An Evening Star reporter described the mill property in 1890:

Below the Military Road are the old ruins of the Argyle mill.

The creek was once spanned here by a bridge, but the structure has been swept away and only the end masonry is left. The ruins of the old mill, with the decayed mill wheel still in place stand close to the bank. The Argyle mill was once a well-known institution, but many years have passed by since the moss-covered wheel ceased to turn to the merry pressure of the water, and now the walls, massive as they are, seem tottering.<sup>36</sup>

The mill ruins were eventually removed during the initial construction of Beach Drive in 1899; however, one of the old bridge abutments still stands on the east bank of the creek in this area.

Isaac Pierce was a farmer and millwright and did not actually work at Pierce Mill. He probably built the structure as an investment and leased the property to a miller. Abner Pierce was a stonemason and Pierce Shoemaker was a jeweler in addition to directing the business of the farm. They both continued the practice of leasing the property until it was acquired for Rock Creek Park. The proprietors apparently received rent from and shared profits with a succession of millers named Donald, Tennyson, Fleckker, Gaskins, and White. Unfortunately, the time of service for each of these men who worked at Pierce Mill has not been positively identified. Several of the millers operated at the mill in two different periods and a number of Rock Creek millers came from the same family, such as Charles and William Gaskins, and Horatio, Alcibiades, and Charles White. In addition, these millers worked in several different mills along the waterway. McCormick's study of Rock Creek mills utilized an extensive group of public records, such as wills, estate papers, deeds, census data, and tax rolls, to describe the historical development of Pierce Mill but without Pierce family or miller's records a certain amount of speculation will be present.<sup>37</sup>

McCormick believed that "Donale" or "Donald" identified by Shoemaker may have been Maryland miller John Darnell who in 1860 operated a grist mill of a type very much like Pierce Mill. The mill ground 2,500 bushels of corn valued at \$3,000 in that census year. His assistant was a 29-year old Virginian named Whiting Tennyson. In 1870 Tennyson was the miller at what may have been Pierce Mill, which was operating as both a merchant and custom grist mill. The mill's three burr stones had the capacity to grind a modest 150 bushels of corn, wheat, or rye per day. In that year the mill produced 40 barrels of wheat flour, 150 barrels of rye flour, and ground 4,075 bushels of corn for offal (animal feed) for market. The census also recorded the

mill's custom grinding of offal (632 bushels), corn and rye (3,000), and meal and flour (3,375 bushels). Two laborers worked at the mill and were paid a total of \$500 in wages in the preceding year. The mill operated for eleven months of the year, and the production had a total value of a little more than \$5,000.<sup>38</sup>

In 1880 the Pierce Mill can be positively identified on the manufacturer's census returns. At that time the White Brothers, Alcibiades and Charles, operated the mill with a capital investment of \$600. They employed one laborer who was paid a dollar a day, and the mill was operated all year round. There were three mill stones with a capacity to grind a low 50 bushels a day. It was noted that half the work was custom grinding and half was for market. By this time a 45 horse power turbine Leffel wheel had been installed, nine feet in height and four feet in width that operated at 60 revolutions per minute. The entire value of the grinding was \$8,250 and the predominant product was corn meal (480,000 pounds) and feed (127,900 pounds).<sup>39</sup>

The grist mills along Rock Creek were modest enterprises in comparison to other nineteenth merchant mills in Washington built along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. The latter location had the advantages of docks, barge conveyance, and access to a transportation artery into the western hinterlands. In addition, the expense of transporting grain to the mills and shipping the barrels of flour to Georgetown or some other market also confined the growth of the Rock Creek mills. However, the cost of constructing large water-powered mills was beyond the means of most American entrepreneurs, and the banks of waterways such as Rock Creek, which could provide a reservoir or small head of water to power two or three stones, were considered attractive sites for investment in the lucrative flour milling industry.<sup>40</sup> Milling was particularly attractive to individual investors after the inventions of Oliver Evans revolutionized the manner in which flour was produced. The significant impact and nature of these inventions was noted by industrial historian Victor S. Clark in 1916:

Shortly before the Revolution considerable improvements were made in America in the application of power to milling machinery and processes, thus displacing manual labor, and the mills upon the Delaware and the Chesapeake were probably the finest at that time in the world. These improvements, which had been introduced gradually during the previous decades, culminated in the inventions of Oliver Evans, of Philadelphia, who perfected devices by which

grain was elevated mechanically to the top of the mill or warehouse, cleaned during gravity transmission to the hoppers, ground, conveyed by screw transmission and a second series of elevators to the top of the building again, cooled, bolted, and barreled during its second descent, without the intervention of any manual operation. This may have been the first instance of an uninterrupted process of mechanical manufacture, from raw material to finished product, in the history of industry.<sup>41</sup>

Clark went on to relate that six men, chiefly employed mostly for barreling, could annually convert 100,000 bushels of grain to flour in a mill outfitted with Evans's devices. To popularize the use of these technological improvements, Evans published the book, The Young Millwright and Miller's Guide (1795) which went through thirteen editions before 1850. In addition to explaining the technical advances of his machinery, Evans also gave his readers advice on bookkeeping and the organization of labor. His work greatly contributed to Maryland and Virginia's rise as the nation's foremost wheat producing states between 1790 and 1870.<sup>42</sup>

Before the American Revolution Georgetown was the largest tobacco port on the Potomac River. The gradual shift of the region's agricultural economy from tobacco to wheat as the staple crop in the late eighteenth century brought important changes. By 1840 flour milling was Georgetown's principal industry. Apparently, Isaac Pierce anticipated this shift in regional agricultural economics and built his stone mill to take advantage of a thriving flour business which peaked between the 1830s and 1850s. The major flour milling centers of the Chesapeake region in this period were Baltimore and Richmond, but the economies of towns like Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington also benefited from the milling industry.

The rise and decline of the milling industry in the District of Columbia reflected the city's economy as a whole in the nineteenth century. In 1840 flour milling was the dominant industry in the nation's capital. The construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was largely responsible for this economic success. However, Rock Creek mills like the Pierce and Blagden concerns remained modestly profitable enterprises until about 1870. Louis P. Shoemaker recalled that his father received about \$1,500 to \$2,000 in "annual rents" from the mill business. This state of affairs would not last long. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century both the city's economy and milling industry were again in transition.<sup>43</sup>

Washington had not grown into the commercial emporium envisioned by George Washington for many reasons. The westward advance of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal had been too slow, there was wasteful competition between the cities of Alexandria, Georgetown, and Washington, and Baltimore's rise to commercial superiority as the nexus of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad both confined and frustrated the capital's development into a national center of commerce. By the end of the 1870s it was apparent to informed Washingtonians that the future economic growth of the city hinged on its political status as the national capital. After 1880 it was the vast growth of the federal government which provided the economic base for the city's prosperity.<sup>44</sup>

Washington's financial base in the last quarter of the nineteenth century became the profitable development of real estate. This important change in the city's patterns of investment had no immediate effect on the operations of Pierce Mill. However, by 1880 technological advances in mill machinery in the form of steel rollers made stone grinding obsolete. In addition, a new milling process had been introduced into the United States in the 1870s that produced a fine white flour from the hard spring wheat predominantly grown in the Midwest. Within a decade the focus of wheat production and flour milling had shifted westward. By 1900 few water powered mills were in operation in the east. Most were abandoned and met the fate of the Blagden Mill. A. P. White continued grinding corn, rye, and wheat into meal and flour at Pierce Mill until the main shaft broke in 1897. He had been renting the facility from the government after the property's acquisition as part of Rock Creek Park and officials reasoned the cost of the damage did not warrant repair of the mill's shaft. Luckily the mill building was still sound and began a new career after 1898 as a concession and later as a historic cultural and educational site.<sup>45</sup>

### The Civil War Period, 1861-1865

The Civil War had a major impact on the late nineteenth century development of the land area of Rock Creek Valley, even though actual combat in the area was minimal. Military activity along Rock Creek largely involved garrison duty at Fort DeRussy, and the construction and occupation of these fortifications had a profound effect on the physical character of the northern

section of Rock Creek Park. In addition, the rapid population growth of Washington during and just after the Civil War with its concomitant social and economic consequences permanently changed the region. Within a decade after the war, northwest Washington county, once considered remote, was perceived as an ideal future location for new suburban residences set apart from the congestion and contagion of the burgeoning national capital.

Important physical changes were made to the upper Rock Creek valley by the construction of Fort DeRussy and Military Road. The fort and the road were built in 1862 as part of a ring of military fortifications. These installations have been termed Washington's "shield," as they were built as a deterrent to Confederate attack. Washington, as the national capital, was an important symbol of Union and strategically vital to the North because of its role as a staging area where federal military forces in the east assembled, equipped, trained, and crossed the Potomac to fight. In this respect it was also the Union's "sword," and defense of the capital for both symbolic and strategic reasons was imperative.<sup>46</sup>

Fort DeRussy proved to be an integral part of the circumferential defense network and saw significant action in repelling a rebel assault on the city in July, 1864. The fort derived its name from Colonel Gustavus A. DeRussy because its construction details were provided by the 4th New York Heavy Artillery under his command. Located just northeast of the intersection of today's Military Road and Oregon Avenue on what was then the farm of Barnett Swart, the fort was strategically placed to form, with Batteries Kingsbury, Sill, and the "Battery to the Left of Rock Creek," formidable resistance to any enemy with designs on moving down the Rock Creek Valley. The fortification held a commanding position over the Milkhouse Ford Road, which provided the only shallow crossing over Rock Creek in the northern section of Washington county. Traces of Batteries Kingsbury, Sill, and the unnamed battery to the left of Rock Creek are no longer visible. However, Fort DeRussy was and remains the most pronounced Civil War structure in Rock Creek Park. The trapazoidal form of the earthworks had a 190 yard perimeter of frontal rifle pits. The fort's original armament contained "three 32 pdr. seacoast guns (*en barbette*), one 100-pdr. Parrot (*en barbette*), five 30-pdr. Parrots (*en embrasure*), one 10-inch and one 24-pdr. Cochran mortar." In 1863 a 100 pdr. center pintle Parrot gun added further range and power to the fort's ordnance. After the war all of the armament was removed and the property

returned to its owner. However, the change affected by the erection of Civil War military fortifications to the landscape proved to be permanent. At least fifty-six acres of trees surrounding Fort DeRussy were cut down to clear sight lines for the guns and provide lumber for the construction of the fort's quarters, outbuildings, and abatis. The site was an eighty-six acre fort complex built with both civilian and military labor, consisting of "two barracks (lumber, measuring 20' x 100'), two mess halls (lumber, 20' x 52'), five officers' quarters (log), two stables (log), and ordnance sergeants' quarter (lumber), and a guard house (log, 12' x 18')." All of these buildings and salvagable materials were sold at a public sale on October 14, 1865, and removed from the site.<sup>47</sup>

The secession of Virginia and the shock of the Union army's defeat at Manassas in 1861 evoked fear and a measure of panic in Washington concerning the defense of the capital. Army engineers began construction of defense fortifications at the outbreak of the war, concentrating their effort on securing positions in northern Virginia, a logical approach route for a Confederate force. By 1862 forty-eight forts circled the city and a clearing fifteen miles long and a mile and a half wide was created along the line of forts in the northern part of the District from the Eastern Branch to the Potomac River. The tree cover well beyond Military Road was also obliterated. An Engineer Department topographical map compiled from field surveys taken between 1864 and 1866 revealed a stump strewn landscape almost devoid of trees between the Seventh Street turnpike (Georgia Avenue) and Daniels Road (Oregon Avenue). Barricades of felled trees were in the path of invaders and an impressive citywide system of fortifications, although hardly an impregnable line, was in place by 1863. Throughout the war Army engineers remained concerned over the network's deficiencies. By 1865 sixty-eight enclosed forts and batteries with support from another ninety-three unarmed batteries for field guns had been built to form a vast fortified perimeter around the capital.<sup>48</sup>

The only actual combat that occurred in the District during the Civil War was a sharp skirmish referred to as the "Battle of Fort Stevens." The conflict is well-known largely for the fact President Lincoln came under fire at the fortification. Rumors of Confederate attack abounded in Washington during the Civil War, particularly when battles were being fought in nearby Maryland and Virginia. However, to Washingtonians it was the aftermath of the fighting and the effects of unsanitary camplife which were most evident.

Nearby battles and contagious disease brought thousands of wounded and sick soldiers to Washington for medical care. Military hospitals filled churches, schools, and institutional and government buildings throughout the national capital and its surrounding hills. The nightly rattle of carts bearing the dead to suburban cemeteries, such as Oak Hill, Glenwood, Mount Olivet, and after its 1864 dedication, Arlington National Cemetery, was the most telling reminder of the price of Union.<sup>49</sup>

In the hot summer month of July, 1864, Confederate Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early led 14,000 troops on a bold raid on Washington, D. C. Heavy losses in the Wilderness and around Spotsylvania had stripped the able-bodied manpower of the city's defense forces because of the need for replacements in the Army of the Potomac. Manned by semi-invalid veterans, green militiamen, and raw recruits, Washington's forts were vulnerable in 1864 to attack from Early's seasoned Confederates. Early's raid was calculated to shock the war weary North and was a stratagem intended to draw Grant's forces northward, thus relieving pressure on Lee at Petersburg. His audacious raid almost succeeded.<sup>50</sup>

The story of the "Battle of Fort Stevens" remains central to the history of Washington's Civil War forts. Early's troops marched down the Shenandoah Valley late in June and occupied Frederick. The Confederates ransomed the city for \$20,000 and then engaged and defeated General Lew Wallace's inferior Union force near the Monocacy River. On the weekend of July 10 and 11 a race to the capital ensued. Grant dispatched reinforcements from the VI and XIX Corps who arrived by river just in time to defend the city. The protracted skirmish at the Monocacy River and the oppressive July heat slowed Early's force enough to prevent his planned swift attack on the Northern capital. On the evening of July 11, the Confederates established positions in front of Fort Slocum, Stevens, and DeRussy. Early soon realized that his opportunity had been lost as intelligence reports revealed that veteran Union troops were bolstering the lines of defense.<sup>51</sup> The excitement of the impending battle drew thousands of Washingtonians out to watch the conflict. The Evening Star reported "the hills, trees, and fences within sight of Fort Stevens were covered with human beings quite a number of whom were ladies," and the throng of sightseers actually interfered with the movement of Union army wagons.<sup>52</sup> The outcome of the weekend's conflict has been described by Civil War historian B. Franklin Cooling:

In large measure, the so-called "Battle of Fort Stevens" was somewhat of a misnomer. In that two-day action there was no rolling of the flank, no piercing of a line, no all out attack, no real maneuvering, no rout, no pursuit. But there was a most important confrontation, a nasty bit of blood letting, and a wise decision. There was, in one sense a victor. On the other hand no one was vanquished.<sup>53</sup>

Fort DeRussy played a vital role in the stalemate. The long range fire of its artillery anchored the Union flank and contained the Confederates beyond Rock Creek preventing a headlong assault on the defense lines. A signalman who was at Fort DeRussy during the conflict wrote to park officials in 1915 to obtain permission to light a signal fire at the fort as part of a Civil War veterans jubilee celebration. He believed the fort had made a significant contribution to the battle:

I respectfully submit that Fort DeRussy is one of the most interesting objects in the park and could easily be made a particularly picturesque feature. It must be the highest point in the park. It was the most prominent fort in the line of fortifications which confronted General Early's Confederate army which attacked Washington in 1864, much stronger in natural position and range than Fort Reno on its left and Fort Stevens on its right. But for Fort DeRussy, Early's veterans in gray no doubt would have entered Washington by the Rock Creek Valley.<sup>54</sup>

Aside from this famous encounter in July, 1864, Fort DeRussy, designed for 11 officers and 233 enlisted men, saw little action beyond drills and maintenance of the ordnance. The monotony of this guard duty was broken up by bathing parties in Rock Creek, when the stream was not fouled by camp waste, occasional holiday and patriotic celebrations, and visits from garrison commanders wives who conveyed packages from relatives. At times freedmen and women musicians toured the forts and also provided a periodic and entertaining diversion from daily routine.<sup>55</sup>

Although the land surrounding the fort is once again heavily wooded, the construction of the fort and Military Road had a long term impact. All of the vegetation in the area is much younger than is generally recognized, and the new road became the major transportation corridor in the upper northwest sector of Washington county between Tennallytown and Brightwood. Military Road was well built and provided a bridge across Rock Creek affording a more

reliable crossing than the Milk House Ford. Although the land on which Military Road was built was not condemned for public use until Rock Creek Park was established, the owners readily granted the government continued permission to use the road and maintain it.<sup>56</sup> The significance of the road's construction remains apparent today as Military Road, although realigned, widened, and modernized, remains the major east-west traffic arterial in this section of the District.

The social and economic impact of the Civil War on the region also contributed to the demographic future of the Rock Creek Valley. Washington's population increased dramatically and, even after the transient military population had left, the city's population had grown by more than fifty percent. Municipal services, especially sewer and water lines and mass transportation, were in high demand. Real estate values rose sharply and streetcar companies established lines during the war to accommodate commuters. Government bureaus expanded and new military installations were built throughout the city. An important byproduct of this sudden growth and wartime prosperity was the reorientation of suburban Maryland and Virginia toward Washington rather than their respective state capitals. Streetcar railroad companies and real estate agents immediately realized the potential of these new conditions. Soon streetcar lines were being extended to service tracts in northwest Washington creating fashionable new suburbs in the "west end."<sup>57</sup>

Washington's suburbanization began in 1854 with the founding of Uniontown, located across the Potomac River from the Navy Yard, and the suburban lifestyle represented by the numerous estates erected on the hills surrounding Washington, popularized by landscape architects, social reformers, and writers, such as Andrew J. Downing, Calvert Vaux, and Catherine Beecher, was well-established by the mid-nineteenth century. Yet, extensive development and the subdivision of farms and estates in Washington county did not begin until the end of the Civil War. Mount Pleasant Village(1865) was the first suburb developed in northwest Washington county and was built on land just south of present day Rock Creek Park between what today is Fourteenth and Park Road and Sixteenth Street, N.W. Other farms near Rock Creek were platted and subdivided in this period, including Meridian Hill (1867), Pleasant Plains (1868), Sherman's Subdivision (1868), and Praether, Wright, and Cox and Wright and Dole's subdivisions (1868). Although these numerous suburban plats were impressive

in real estate atlases, intensive development of these tracts did not occur until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>58</sup>

### Nineteenth Century Roads and Land Uses After 1865

The construction of Military Road had broken with the traditional pattern of road building in the Rock Creek Valley because of the war emergency. All of the important county roads built in the park before the Civil War, including Pierce's Mill road and Joshua Pierce's Road (later renamed Klingle Road) both laid out in 1831, Broad Branch Road, surveyed and built in 1839, and the 1847 Blagden's Mill Road, were privately built, presumably because the owner wished to connect with or to improve access to a mill property or farm from a major public road leading to town centers in Maryland and the District of Columbia.<sup>59</sup>

The development of Pierce's Mill Road illustrates the gradual transition of these thoroughfares from private to county roads. Constructed as a connection for the mill and farmstead with the Rockville Turnpike on the west, a major access route to Georgetown, the road eventually developed into a major east-west connection through the Rock Creek valley. It led across a ford just below the mill leading to the Fourteenth Street Road on the east. Public maintenance and improvements followed and by 1872 the road was significant enough that District officials expended public monies to build Shoemaker's (Pierce Mill) Bridge. By 1890 the road had emerged as one of the most important transportation routes in the county.<sup>60</sup>

Joshua Pierce's Road was laid out as a connection between the owner's estate, Linnaean Hill, and Pierce's Mill Road on the east. Broad Branch Road was laid out for Abner Pierce in 1839 as a route north to connect Pierce Mill with Milk House Ford, the Brookville, and the Old Baltimore Roads. Blagden's Mill Road was planned and built in 1847 to access the "Argyle" Mill to Brightwood and the Piney Branch Road, which led south to the Fourteenth Street Road leading into Washington. Milkhouse Ford Road was an old public thoroughfare, but after the war the segment in the Rock Creek Valley was largely superseded by Military Road. By 1884 the road had been renamed Rock Creek Ford Road, and by 1890, it was a mere access lane to property located along the east side of Rock Creek above Military Road. When Rock Creek Park was established only three county lanes, Klingle, Pierce Mill, and

Military Roads had through connections on either side of the valley above the National Zoological Park. These roads and the major north-south routes on the eastern and western edges of what became Rock Creek Park, such as Fourteenth Street, Broad Branch, and Daniels (today Oregon Avenue) Roads, largely determined the development of the land area into the twentieth century.<sup>61</sup>

A series of topographical maps prepared by Army engineers between 1866 and 1890 clearly reflects a gradual increase in population density and land use activity in the Rock Creek Valley in this period. One of the most interesting and detailed maps of the area was prepared in conjunction with Michler's survey and report concerning a potential location for a public park in the District of Columbia. This map depicts the antebellum building complexes, farms, and Civil War structures previously discussed. In addition to these features, the map also illustrated the existence of a new road on the east side of Broad Branch on the Pierce Shoemaker farm. This lane led north and connected with Military Road. There were two clearings along this road flanked by five buildings. In the larger clearing to the north were four buildings identified by the names Dickinson, Robinson, and Clock. An unidentified house was located in the lower clearing. These five structures probably were the tenant houses for which Shoemaker paid county taxes in 1868. A later topographical map prepared under the direction of General J. Lydecker, published in 1884, did not reflect any evidence of the houses and illustrated the area as uncultivated woodland.<sup>62</sup>

A second instance of a short-lived improvement on Shoemaker's vast farm was the construction of what may have been a failed resort complex. Michler's map located three large buildings collectively named "Crystal Springs" on a site that is approximately a half-mile south of the present Park Police headquarters on Beach Drive and from this area about 800 feet east of Rock Creek. As was the case with the tenant houses, the property had reverted to woodland by 1884. Crystal Springs was a hotel that flourished during and just after the Civil War located on an old tract known as "White's Mill Seat" near the location of long abandoned mill ruins and apparently was a renowned spot because of its fine waters. It was considered a particularly picturesque section of Rock Creek. Louis P. Shoemaker, an amateur historian of Rock Creek Park who was raised on the estate, believed that the "rugged and picturesque character of the landscape, the great number of huge rocks

deposited in the stream, and the rapidity with which the water flows . . . . causes this to be unquestionably the most attractive and valuable portion of Rock Creek Park.<sup>63</sup>

Apparently, the Crystal Springs development was built to attract Washingtonians to take in the waters and enjoy the natural beauty of the location. The property was a long buggy ride from the city, but was a popular stopping point along country roads in an area that was already being considered Washington's park. A reporter in the Saturday Evening Visitor in 1869 relayed this attitude while describing a trip in the outlying country around Washington with a New York friend:

We enjoyed a devious ride, via Crystal Springs, Brightwood Soldiers' Home and Bladensburg on Thursday last with a gentleman from New York. The surpassing beauty of the scenery and the fine condition of the county roads called forth from our metropolitan friend expressions of intense delight, "You need no Central Park in Washington," said he, "for nature has provided for rural delights within sight of your doors."<sup>64</sup>

Crystal Springs was accessed by a road built westward off of the Fourteenth Street Road. This road led to a roughly oval shaped drive which had connections to the Piney Branch racecourse and a lane leading down to Rock Creek. The racecourse established in 1857, later renamed Brightwood Driving Park, was still extant when the trotting oval was acquired for parkland. Harness racing was a popular pastime in Washington area and drew large crowds well into the late nineteenth century. Since the grounds of Crystal Springs and the race course were owned and leased by Shoemaker, it was possible there may have been a business tie between the two sites.<sup>65</sup>

The recovering Rock Creek landscape above Military Road remained relatively unchanged until the formation of the park. A reporter in 1890 considered the northeastern section of the proposed park to be "comparatively bare and uninteresting" and suggested that the services of a landscape gardener would be required in this area.<sup>66</sup> The antebellum farms of Hoyle, Moreland, Pilling, and Titnam were sold to new owners on the east side of Rock Creek, and these lands continued to be cultivated until the property was acquired by the government. On the west side of the creek, several small tracts owned by Horace White, Notley Moreland, and the Kurtz heirs were also farmed by successors. The Kurtz farmstead had been owned by Barnett Swartz

who settled in the region after the Boshke map was prepared in 1856-1857. A large portion of his farm was commandeered for the construction and operation of Fort DeRussy and Military Road during the Civil War. The land was later bought by John R. Dos Passos, the father and namesake of the famous American author. The land in the northern section of the park owned by the Clagett and Carroll heirs was also sold off after the Civil War to W. R. Riley and Alida Catherine Brown and largely remained a rolling wooded landscape.<sup>67</sup>

Within a generation more than a dozen people owned separate tracts above Military Road. Construction of houses and farm buildings or extensive cultivation of the land was minimal. Of the houses that were erected after the Civil War most were sited close to Daniels Road (Oregon Avenue) or the Seventh Street Turnpike (Georgia Avenue). Plans to develop suburbs in the Rock Creek Valley began in the mid-1870s, when the Blagden heirs and Alexander "Boss" Shepherd constructed access roads into what became the park. Washington's post-Civil War residential expansion beyond the 1792 L'Enfant-Ellicott plan's city limits was largely focused along old county roads extending from Seventh and Fourteenth Streets. After the Civil War major expenditures on public buildings, the acquisition of parks, and upgrading of the city's sewers and streets imparted confidence that a "new era" was underway and allayed Washingtonians' fears that the government bureaucracy might move to another city. Shepherd was vice-president of the Board of Public Works and the driving force behind the improvement projects built under the auspices of the territorial government between 1871 and 1874. He fully realized the potential of real estate investment in the region. However, the political fallout of these controversial public works initiatives and Shepherd's personal financial problems may have diminished his interest in developing the Rock Creek tract. Shepherd declared bankruptcy in 1876 and later went to Mexico in 1880. He remade his fortune investing in that country's silver mines, and in 1887 Shepherd returned to a city that hailed him a hero for his direction of the public works, which had dramatically improved the image of Washington.<sup>68</sup>

Washington experienced its first peacetime building boom in the 1880s. This development was fueled by the vast expansion of the federal government after the Civil War. Real estate speculators made quick fortunes and soon recognized that suburban growth could be extended well beyond the city limits if street car lines were built. By 1887 the Shepherd and Blagden tracts were

conspicuous on the city's real estate atlases, although at this point they were no more than paper suburbs. Yet, by the turn of the century, new streetcar suburbs were under development in Washington county, including Chevy Chase (1890) and Cleveland Park (1894) on the west of Rock Creek and Petworth (1887) and Brightwood Park (1891) on the east. All of these communities were rapidly developed around the valley. Undoubtedly Shepherd's and Blagden's subdivisions would have been built to the banks of Rock Creek if the acquisition of the park lands had not stunted their westward growth in 1890.<sup>69</sup>

At the time of its proposed acquisition, the approximately 2,000 acre land area of Rock Creek Park had more than seventy owners. Approximately one third of these individuals had built "improvements" on their tracts. Only a handful of the resident owners claimed anything beyond a "small dwelling" on their land. The exceptions, of course, were Pierce Shoemaker and Joshua Pierce Klingle. The Blagdens had sold the "Argyle" mill complex to real estate magnate and banker Brainard H. Warner, and the structures were in ruins. Warder became one of the leading members of the citizen's committee led by Charles C. Glover that vigorously lobbied for legislation establishing Rock Creek Park. Harvey L. Page, a talented and prosperous Washington architect, had purchased land on the east side of Rock Creek across from the Pierce-Klingle mansion and erected a large frame residence on a site just to the south. Page had designed the Palais Royal Department Store (Woodward and Lothrop's north building, razed in 1987) and numerous important mansions in the city, such as the 1892 Weeks House (Women's National Democratic Club).

The only other owners with buildings that exceeded \$1500, a sum well below the \$4,000 value of the Page and Klingle complexes, were Samuel Freas and William J. Cowden, whose farmsteads were located on land that is presently occupied by the Rock Creek golf course. Most of the remaining "improvements" were valued by the government at less than \$1,000, and were modest even if the owner's valuations were more accurate. On the average they were three times higher than the official estimates.<sup>70</sup> Few of the residences built in the Rock Creek Valley at this time were considered substantial enough to save. An exchange between Representatives Thomas R. Stockdale of Mississippi (D) and Oscar F. Moore of New Hampshire (R) captured the prevailing official attitude toward the numerous vernacular log and frame "small dwellings" of Rock Creek above Pierce Mill:

Our friend from Mississippi has plaintively alluded to the 'ancestral homes' that will be desecrated by the purchase of this park and its condemnation by the government. Sir, I took pains the other day to go out and look over the ground contemplated for this park and to view the 'ancestral homes' there. I found just one. It was a log cabin, or the next thing to it, and its residents were two old colored people. So far as I know they are the only residents in that portion of the park that will be incorporated in this park if purchased by the United States.<sup>71</sup>

It was clear from statements made in the House debate over the Rock Creek legislation that the preservation of Washington's past represented by hewn log cabins or picturesque Blagden Mill ruins was not a central factor for creation of the new park. "Rock Creek in Olden Days" had survived above Klingle Road, but it was now on the outskirts of a city with designs on becoming a cosmopolitan world capital. Crosby S. Noyes, a staunch supporter of the park's creation and editor of the Evening Star (Washington), forcefully expressed this opinion in an editorial in 1888:

The project of converting the picturesque Rock Creek Valley into a public park has long been cherished by thoughtful citizens as the one thing needed to justify the claim of Washington to a rank among the most beautiful and attractive capital cities of the world. We can brag justifiably of our carriage-ways (keeping a discreet silence, however, about our foot-ways); of our shade trees; of our public buildings (not making proud mention of the pension office though), and of the many handsome private houses that would be creditable to any city. But when we come to the matter of that indispensable feature of a first-class city, a great public park supplying a health and pleasure resort for all classes, the comparison of Washington to the European capitals of London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna, with their thousands of acres of parking is most humiliating.<sup>72</sup>

The beauty of the Rock Creek Valley landscape was a powerful stimulus for creation of the national park. However, Washington's image as a future world capital, public health issues, particularly conservation of clean water sources and efficient solid waste disposal, and the need for park facilities for an expanding suburban population were also important to the enactment of legislation establishing Rock Creek Park. The valley's past of ancient aboriginal miners, settlers, farmers, and millers was not forgotten. However, to the generation that established the park the primary significance of the

land was its future conservation as a great urban park the equal of any world capital.

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## CHAPTER III

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Nelson Page, Washington and Its Romance (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1923). The plate was a copy of a 1913 print by Emily and Walter Reese. It was published before in 1918 in the New Country Life Magazine. A copy of this print is in the Rock Creek Park photograph files of the Washingtoniana Division, District of Columbia Public Library, Washington, D.C.

<sup>2</sup>James Bryce, The Nation's Capital, (Washington: Byron S. Adams, 1913), p. 60-61. The text of this book was a speech delivered by Bryce to the Committee of One Hundred on the Future Development of Washington, at the residence of Arthur J. Parsons, February 27, 1913. The address was arranged and later edited for publication by Washington architect and civic activist Glenn Brown. Illustrations were provided by photographer A. G. Robinson. The piece was later reprinted in a collection of essays on Washington entitled The Capital of Our Country (Washington: National Geographic Society, 1923), pp. 85-108.

<sup>3</sup>Earl Godwin, "A Playground as God Made It," American Forests (1930), pp. 337-341 and 346; Kathleen Read Coontz, "Rock Creek Park--A Fairy Princess," American Motorist (December, 1930), pp. 6-7 and 38; Victoria Faber Stevenson, "Rock Creek as a Holiday Haunt," American Motorist, D. C. Edition (September 1929), pp. 10, 18-19. Copies of these articles and many other clippings with similar content are located in the "Rock Creek Park" Files, 1900-1930, Washingtoniana Division, District of Columbia Public Library, Washington, D. C.

<sup>4</sup>Coontz, "Rock Creek Park--A Fairy Princess," p. 38.

<sup>5</sup>The lack of appropriations adequate to develop the park and its impact on construction policies was expressed in a series of letters preserved in the files of the Engineer Commissioner related to the employment of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to prepare a master plan for the park. This theme will be discussed in the following chapter. See File 135706, Correspondence of the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1897-1918, RG 42, Entry 241, National Archives and Record Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>6</sup>The literature concerning the L'Enfant plan is extensive, however, the works by John Reps, Monumental Washington: The Planning and Development of the Capital Center (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1967). Paul D. Spreiregen, ed., On the Art of Designing Cities: Selected Essays of Elbert Peets, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968); and Frederick Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977) are considered

standard references on Washington's planning history. See also the special issue of The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress 36 (Summer 1979) with articles on the L'Enfant Plan and Washington maps by Richard W. Stephenson, J. L. Sibley Jennings, Jr., and Ralph Ehrenberg.

<sup>7</sup>The most recent work to debunk the "swamp myth" is Kenneth R. Bowling's Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever, (Washington: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988), pp. 91-95; see also Constance M. Green, Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962; paperback reprint edition, 1976) pp. 3-5, and 12-13. Green relates eighteenth century Washington to be as beautiful and healthy a place as any further up the Potomac River. However, she believes deforestation along the Potomac River created a downwash of silt and vegetation that constricted brooks and seriously affected the natural drainage of the region. Eventually this created the swampy marshes which caused the diseases suffered so regularly in Washington in the nineteenth century. See also Frederick Gutheim's description of the site of the national capital in the late eighteenth century in Worthy of the Nation, pp. 19-21. For a description of the importance surrounding hills as the frame for the L'Enfant's plan, see Frederick Gutheim, "City and Capital--The Nature of Washington," AIA Journal, (Special Issue) 1 (January 1963), pp. 85- 91.

<sup>8</sup>Ralph E. Ehrenberg, "Mapping the Nation's Capital: The Surveyor's Office, 1791-1818," The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress 36 (Summer 1979), pp. 280-284. For a history of the boundary markers of the District of Columbia, see Fred E. Woodward, "A Ramble Along the Boundary Stones of the District of Columbia with a Camera," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 10 (1907), pp. 63-74, and Boundary Markers of the Nation's Capital: A Proposal for Their Preservation and Protection, National Capital Planning Commission Bicentennial Report, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 3-9.

<sup>9</sup>Wilhelmus B. Bryan, A History of the National Capital, Volume I, 1790-1814 (New York: MacMillan Co., 1914), p. 190n; and see also Rock Creek Watershed Conservation Study, (Washington: U. S. Department of the Interior, 1979), pp. 3.1-3.7.

<sup>10</sup>Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation, p. 49.

<sup>11</sup>This study uses the spelling "Pierce" and not "Peirce" or "Pearce" which appear in the historical records. "Pierce" was in common usage as the title for this family's properties by 1903. The change in spelling is explained in the Evening Star (Washington), August 15, 1903. Published materials concerning the history of the Pierce and Shoemaker Families include Louis P. Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 12 (1908), pp. 38-52. Incidentally, Shoemaker spelled his family ancestor's surname in the modern form as "Pierce"; Allen C. Clark, "The Old Mills," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 31-32 (1930), pp. 101-102; and John A. Saul, "In Memoriam--Louis Pierce Shoemaker, 1856-1916," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 20 (1917), pp. 296-298; Charles H. McCormick, Milling in Rock Creek Park Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service (Washington: U.

S. Department of Interior, 1967), pp. 32-46; and see also unpublished works, Blaine E. Cliver, "Historic Structures Report, Part I (Portion) on Pierce Mill-Water-Wheel, Rock Creek Park," February 1967, U. S. Department of Interior, National Park Service; Lisa Koteen, "Peirce's Plantation: Yesterday and Today," Typescript, January 16, 1973, Brown University; Ruth E. Butler, "Pierce Mill, Washington, D. C." HABS Doc. 22, Department of Interior, 1935. Copies of these unpublished typescript reports are located at the Rock Creek Nature Center, Washington, D. C. See also the National Register forms for the Pierce buildings, Nancy C. Taylor, "Pierce Mill," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Listed March 24, 1969; Hellen Dillon, "Pierce Springhouse and Art Barn," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Listed October 25, 1973; and Francisco J. Menendez and Charles Szoradi, "Still House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Draft), February 22, 1989. [Copy available at Rock Creek Nature Center].

<sup>12</sup>Albert Boschke, "Topographical Map of the District of Columbia, Surveyed in the Years 1856, 1857, 1858, and 1859." Copy located in File 69, RG77, Civil Works Map File, Cartographic Branch, National Archives, Alexandria, Virginia. For information on the Clagett property in Rock Creek Park, see Barry Mackintosh and Victoria Rousuck, "Clagett Site, Rock Creek Park," Unpublished typescript report, April, 1979. Copy located at Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.. It is believed that 7714 13th Street is Pomona, the homestead of Darius Claggett. See Marvin Kaplan, "Shepherd Park: Creating an Integrated Neighborhood," in Kathryn S. Smith, ed, Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital (Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, Inc, 1988), pp. 261.

<sup>13</sup>Boshke Map, 1861. The dates for the sawmill were derived from comparison of District surveyor Charles J. Uhlmann's 1864 "Plat Map for Turnpike," Copy on File at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C. This plat map illustrated Pierce's plantation and labeled the buildings and the appearance of a new structure just north of Pierce Mill on Michler's 1866 Survey Map. Information on the identity and dates of construction of the Pierce farm buildings was also derived from Pierce Mill history files at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center with the advice of Ted Hazen and Stephen Strach, the miller and site manager for Pierce Mill.

<sup>14</sup> McCormick, Milling in Rock Creek Park, pp. 32-46; Koteen, "Peirce's Plantation: Yesterday and Today," January 16, 1973, Brown University; Butler, "Pierce Mill, Washington, D. C." HABS Doc. 22, Department of Interior, 1935. Taylor, "Pierce Mill," Dillon, "Pierce Springhouse and Art Barn," Menendez and Szoradi, "Still House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Forms. The location of the Pierce stone quarry at Broad Branch is illustrated in Rock Creek Watershed Conservation Study, (Washington:U. S. Department of the Interior, 1979), Figure 3-1. The existence of a quarry at the mouth of Piney Branch is known from an 1835 deed of from Isaac Pearce to Joshua Pearce which states: "This deed reserves the equal privilege for grantor to use the quarry near the mouth of Piney Branch and also the free right of way to and from the same." See File 79, Land Acquisition Records, 1891-1894, RG 42, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, National Archives and Records Service,

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Washington, D. C. The quarry was located on the east bank of Rock Creek just above Joshua Pierce's Road (Klinge Road) on an 1847 survey map, see File M-46, RG 351, Records of the Government of the District of Columbia, Surveyor's Office, Cartographic Branch, NARS, Alexandria, Virginia.

<sup>15</sup>Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Census of the United States, Population Schedules, District of Columbia, NARS, Washington, D. C. See also McCormick, Milling in Rock Creek Park, pp. 32-46. For total slave population figures in Washington County in 1840, see Green, Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid. See also Abner C. Pierce, File No. 3189, Washington County, Administration Docket, Office Register of Wills, District of Columbia. Pierce's land was worth \$22,000 and household inventory was valued by the court at \$10,042.99.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. See also Eighth Census of the United States, 1860 Population Schedule, District of Columbia, National Archives.

<sup>18</sup>The inscribed date of the projecting central pavilion on the Pierce-Klinge Mansion has been assumed to be 1896 because an inverted numeral on the carved date under the porch appears to be a nine rather than a six. However, the projecting addition is clearly indicated in the following topographical maps: Major N. Michler, "Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington, D. C." (1867), File 113, RG 77, Civil Works Maps Files; and Major G. J. Lydecker, "Topographical Map of the District of Columbia" (1884), File Annual Reports, 1884, RG 351; and General Thomas L. Casey, et. al., "Map Showing the Boundaries and Property Lines of the Proposed Rock Creek Park" (1890), File 55.8-1, RG 79, Records of the National Park Service; All maps are located at the Cartographic Branch, NARS, Alexandria, Virginia. If the addition was made in 1896, the records of the park managers, the Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, would have noted this major addition. It is stated in their initial printed report that no improvements were made in the park until 1897, see Report of the Rock Creek Board of Control, District of Columbia (Washington, D. C.: Norman T. Elliot Printing Company, 1907), p. 21. Furthermore, there is also no record of this construction project in RG 42, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D.C. which contains the minutes and correspondence of the Board of Control.

<sup>19</sup>Linnean Hill (Klinge House), HABS No. DC 11, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; Washington Star, May 16, 1937; and for Joshua Pierce photograph, see The Sunday Star, August 5, 1945. See also Proctor's Washington and Environs, (Washington: Washington Sunday Star, 1949), pp. 85-88 and 245-246; John A. Saul, "Tree Culture, or a Sketch of Nurseries in the District of Columbia," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 10 (1907), pp. 47-51; Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," pp. 45-47; Saul, "In Memoriam--Louis Peirce Shoemaker, 1856-1916," pp. 296-298; Robert Fenton, "The Klinge Mansion," July, 1955, Typescript; "Joshua Peirce, D. C. Nurseryman," Typescript prepared for Resource Management, Rock Creek Park; Helen Dillon, "Pierce-Klinge Mansion," National Register of Historic Places Form, Listed October 10, 1973. Copies of

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all of the above cited unpublished manuscripts, articles, and reports are on file at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>20</sup>The story of the naming of the Joshua Pierce estate is related in Fenton, "The Klingle Mansion," p. 1. According to his account, the name was changed because Mrs. Pierce became irritated by the slaves' reference to the homestead as "Flea Rig." Fenton's source was a paper by E. Shoemaker, "Historical Houses," June 17, 1926, which was on file at the D.C. Public Library in 1955. See also Joshua Pierce, File No. 5966, Administration Docket, Register of Wills, District of Columbia. [Located at D. C. Courthouse, Washington, D. C.]

<sup>21</sup>Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Census of the United States, 1830-1850, Population Schedules, District of Columbia, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>22</sup>RG 29, Bureau of the Census, Non-Population Schedule, 1860. District of Columbia, Agriculture, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>23</sup>Saul, "Tree Culture, or a Sketch of Nurseries in the District of Columbia," pp. 47-51; Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," pp. 45-47. A copy of one catalogue entitled, Joshua Peirce, Proprietor, Catalogue of Fruit and Ornamental Trees, Shrubbery, and Plants For Sales at the Nurseries of Linnaean Hill, Rock Creek, Near Washington D. C. (Washington: William H. Moore, 1857) is on file at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>24</sup>Downing's career is discussed in the standard text on the history of landscape architecture, Norman T. Newton, Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1971); and for a more recent career appraisal, see Catherine M. Howett, "Andrew Jackson Downing," in William H. Tishler, ed., American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places, (Washington: The Preservation Press, 1989), pp. 31-33. Downing's influential work in Washington is discussed in Daniel Reiff, Washington Architecture, 1791-1861: Problems in Development, (Washington: U. S. Commission of Fine Arts, 1971), pp. 44, 49, 71, 89, 92, 113-129. Downing's Mall plan is illustrated and discussed in Reps, Monumental Washington, pp. 50-53; and Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation, pp. 53-55.

<sup>25</sup>See Major N. Michler, "Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington, D. C." (1867), File 113, RG 77, Civil Works Maps Files, NARS, Alexandria, Virginia. William Seale, The President's House (Washington: White House Historical Society), p. 451.

<sup>26</sup>U. S. G. S. Map, 1892.

<sup>27</sup>"Blagden's Mill Road," Land Acquisition Papers, RG 42, Entry 242, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington D. C.

<sup>28</sup>McCormick, Milling in Rock Creek Park, pp. 47-51; Eighth Census of the United States, Population Schedules, District of Columbia, NARA,

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Washington, D. C.; and for a photograph of the Blagden home before its demolition, see The Sunday Star, October 28, 1934.

<sup>29</sup>Fifth and Seventh Census of the United States, 1830 and 1850 Population Schedules, District of Columbia, and RG 29, Non-Population Schedules, 1860, Agriculture, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>30</sup>"File 17," Land Acquisition Papers, RG 42, Entry 242, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARS, Washington D. C.; "Picturesque Rock Creek Park," Washington Star, November 16, 1902; and Ruth E. Butler, Memo--Subject Pierce Mill," Pierce Mill Files, Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>31</sup>McCormick, Milling in Rock Creek Park, pp. 21-55. There was also an eighteenth century watermill on the Pierce property on a parcel of land known variously as "White's Mill Seat" in 1756, later in 1800 as "Peter's Mill Seat," and "Crystal Springs Tract" by 1860. See Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," pp. 42-43; Clark, "The Old Mills," pp. 103-104. Little is known about the mill and in all likelihood it ceased operations before the nineteenth century. The mill seat may have been one of the special land grants given by the state of Maryland about 1748 to encourage the manufacture of flour to settlers who would erect watermills. See John L. Bishop, A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860. (Philadelphia: Edward Young and Company, 1868), p. 146.

<sup>32</sup>McCormick, Milling in Rock Creek Park, pp. 22-26.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid, pp. 27-32.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, pp. 49-52.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid, pp. 47-49.

<sup>36</sup>"Along Rock Creek," Washington Star, June 7, 1890.

<sup>37</sup>McCormick, Milling in Rock Creek Park, pp. 21-55.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid. pp. 32-39; see also RG 29, Bureau of the Census, Non-Population Schedule, 1870. District of Columbia, Manufactures, NARS, Washington, D. C.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-20.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., see also Victor S. Clark, History of Manufactures in the United States, 1607-1860 (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1916), pp. 174-180.

<sup>41</sup>Clark, History of Manufactures in the United States, 1607-1860, p. 179.

<sup>42</sup>McCormick, Milling in Rock Creek Park, pp. 10-20.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., and see also Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," p. 40.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., For a discussion of Washington's economy in this period, see also Green, Washington, Capital City, 1800-1950, Vol. II, p. 3-34.

<sup>45</sup>McCormick, Milling on Rock Creek, p. 10-20.

<sup>46</sup>See Benjamin Franklin Cooling, "Civil War Deterrent: The Defenses of Washington," Military Affairs 29 (Winter, 1966), pp.164-178; and "Defending Washington During the Civil War," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 71-72 (1971-1972), pp. 314-337; Symbol, Sword and Shield: Defending Washington During the Civil War (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1975; and Benjamin Franklin Cooling III and Walton H. Owen, Mr. Lincoln's Forts: A Guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Company, 1988). My synopsis of the history of Fort DeRussy is largely drawn from Cooling's extensive work on the Civil War history of Washington, D. C. Cooling provides a thorough bibliography for the military history of the Civil War in this region in both Symbol, Sword and Shield and Mr. Lincoln's Forts.

<sup>47</sup>Cooling and Owen, Mr. Lincoln's Forts, pp. 151-152.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-16; Green, Washington, Capital City, 1800-1950, Vol. II, p. 261. See also "Environs of Washington," Prepared from Original Surveys in the Engineer Department" [1864-1866], File F 99-2, RG 77, Civil Works Map Files, NARA, Cartographic Branch, Alexandria, Virginia.

<sup>49</sup>Green, Washington, Capital City, 1800-1950, Vol. II, p. 261-262.

<sup>50</sup>Cooling, Symbol, Sword, and Shield, pp. 173-210.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Washington Star, July 12, 1864; see also Margaret Leech, Reveille in Washington (New York and London: Harper and Bros., 1941), pp. 340-346.

<sup>53</sup>Cooling and Owens, Mr. Lincoln's Forts, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup>Lieutenant George Carr Round to Secretary Board of Control [C. W. Kurtz], August 20, 1915, File # 127919, RG 42, Entry 241, Correspondence of the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>55</sup>Cooling and Owen, Mr. Lincoln's Forts, p. 152.

<sup>56</sup>"Military Road," Land Acquisition Records, RG 42, Entry 242, 1891-1894, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>57</sup>Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation, pp. 68-70.

<sup>58</sup>For a general discussion of suburbanization of American cities in the nineteenth century, see Kenneth T. Jackson, Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), chapters 3 and 4. For histories of two of these neighborhoods, see Howard Gillette, Jr. "Old Anacostia: Washington's Oldest Suburb," and Howard Gillette, Jr. and Linda Low, "Mount Pleasant: Community in an Urban Setting," in Smith, ed., Washington at Home, pp. 97-105 and 131-137. The history of real estate investment in the remaining farm tracts was discussed in Columbia Heights Citizen's Association, A Statement of the Advantages of Beautiful Columbia Heights (Washington: Columbia Heights Citizens Association, 1904). See also the scrapbook entitled "Suburban Districts, Washington, D. C." The above cited pamphlet and scrapbook are located in the Washingtoniana Division, D. C. Public Library, Washington, D. C.

<sup>59</sup>"History and the Status of Roads in Rock Creek Park," February 25, 1930, Unpublished typescript. Copy located in Physical Data Files, Reservation 339, Map Room, National Capital Region Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

<sup>60</sup>Charles McLaughlin, "Historic Structures Report, Pierce Mill Bridge," Unpublished typescript, 1987. Copy on file at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>61</sup>"History and the Status of Roads in Rock Creek Park," February 25, 1930. See also Lydecker, "Topographical Map of the District of Columbia," [1884], File Annual Reports, 1884, NARA Cartographic Branch, Washington, D. C. Daniels Road was built circa 1871 and was known as "New Cut" Road until about 1880. It was named for Joseph Daniel, the adjacent property owner, sometime after this date. See "Daniels Road," General Files, 1910-1954, RG 66 Records of the Commission of Fine Arts, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>62</sup>See Michler, "Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington, D. C." [1867]; and Lydecker, "Topographical Map of the District of Columbia" (1884). For full citations to these maps, see note 17. See also Tax Assessment Books, Washington County, 1868, p. 25. RG 351, Entry 193, Records of the Government of the District of Columbia, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>63</sup>Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," p. 42; and Evening Star, September 1, 1903. [The information about Crystal Springs hotel came from a letter of Louis P. Shoemaker concerning development of Rock Creek Park published by the newspaper].

<sup>64</sup>"Country Drives," Saturday Evening Visitor, September 4, 1869.

<sup>65</sup>Fred A. Emery, "Mount Pleasant and Meridian Hill," Records of the Columbian Historical Society, 33-34 (1932), pp. 187-223.

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<sup>66</sup>Washington Star, March 14, 1891; see also Piera M. Weiss, "The Origins of Rock Creek Park," A Paper presented at the Sixteenth Annual Conference of Local History, March 4, 1989, D. C. Public Library.

<sup>67</sup>Land Acquisition Records, 1891-1894, RG 42, Entry 242, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARS, Washington, D. C. See also Casey, et. al., "Map Showing the Boundaries and Property Lines of the Proposed Rock Creek Park" (1890), File 55.8-1, RG 79, NARA, Cartographic Branch, Alexandria, Virginia.

<sup>68</sup>Green, Washington, Capital City, 1800-1950, Vol. II, p. 3-34; and see also William M. Maury, Alexander "Boss" Shepherd and the Board of Public Works GW Washington Studies, No. 3, (Washington: George Washington University, 1975), pp. 46-52.

<sup>69</sup>The most ambitious developer was Senator Francis E. Newlands of Nevada (D) whose bold plans for the streetcar suburb of Chevy Chase was the catalyst for a major extension of Connecticut Avenue, the construction of an electric streetcar line to the District boundary, and the establishment of this exclusive community with social, religious, and educational facilities. See essays on Chevy Chase, Cleveland Park, and Shepherd Park in Smith, ed, Washington at Home, pp. 191-213 and 261-270.

<sup>70</sup>Land Acquistion Records, RG 42, Entry 242, 1891-1894, Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>71</sup>Evening Star (Washington), March 25, 1890.

<sup>72</sup>Evening Star (Washington), December 29, 1888.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Establishment of Rock Creek Park.

The 1890 legislation establishing Rock Creek Park set aside land in the District of Columbia for the purpose of creating a "public park and pleasure ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of the United States." A pleasure ground in the nineteenth century was usually considered to be a naturalistic park designed primarily for the quiet contemplation of scenery. These green urban expanses provided the fresh air, lakes, meadows, and sunshine of the country and were perceived as an antidote to the stress of indoor work and congestion of the city. Pleasure grounds soon evolved into important urban recreational spaces that provided children with play areas and adults with carriage drives, horseback riding trails, walking paths, and, by the 1890s, fields for organized outdoor sports activities.<sup>1</sup>

The creation of large urban parks, such as New York's Central Park (1858), Philadelphia's Fairmount Park (1865), San Francisco's Golden Gate Park (1870), and Forest Park in St. Louis (1876), brought an idealized natural scenery into the city. These parks were consciously designed to counter the enervating and unhealthy urban environment. Nature as a civilizing force with romantic associations with morality, peace, health, and the vitality of the individual and family was deeply rooted in American intellectual tradition. By the mid-nineteenth century social reformers, religious leaders, landscape architects, and civic leaders became concerned by the potential threat posed to these values by uncontrolled, explosive growth in American cities. They strenuously advocated creation of parks and open living spaces to help alleviate the squalor and misery of crowded and disease-ridden neighborhoods. Drawing on the rhetoric of republicanism and sanitary reform and of the moral superiority of nature, these reformers sought to supply naturalistic communal spaces open to all people, which promoted health, urban culture, and democratic ideals.<sup>2</sup>

America's urban parks movement of the nineteenth century was profoundly influenced by the work of Frederick Law Olmsted. As a reformer and landscape architect, Olmsted sought to reshape the American city by designing public parks and park systems to balance the best aspects of city

and country life. He envisioned a modern metropolis where large naturalistic recreational parks and openly built residential communities would be integrated with the working commercial center to provide for the social and psychological well-being of the urban resident. Olmsted's park systems did shape the growth of many American cities and helped inspire the city planning movement. This legacy would be particularly significant to the development of Rock Creek Park because his son and professional successor, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., would prepare an influential report on the city's park system as a component of the 1901-1902 McMillan Plan and a 1918 comprehensive study for the development for the park.<sup>3</sup>

The creation of Rock Creek Park in 1890 was a late manifestation of the park movement's antidote to urban congestion and contagion. Washington had lagged behind larger cities like New York and Philadelphia, both in population size and physical growth. However, the Civil War and the subsequent rapid expansion of the federal government in the latter half of the nineteenth century provided the economic stimulus for Washington's urbanization. Soon the unhealthy and crowded urban conditions, which a generation earlier had spurred construction of large naturalistic parks in other major cities, became evident in Washington. The creation of Rock Creek was promoted as a remedy to urban ills, but it was stressed by park advocates that the preservation of its unrivaled natural scenery was also important. Therefore, the establishment of Rock Creek Park was also linked to the nascent conservation movement in this country, which pioneered the concept of national park reserves. Congress emphasized preservation of the park's natural resources and landscape scenery in the legislation, mandating that "regulations shall provide for the preservation from injury or spoliation of all timber, animals, or curiosities within said park, and their retention in their natural condition, as nearly as possible." Thus, from its inception Rock Creek Park became a landscape that combined the conservation and recreational missions of the wilderness preserve and urban park.<sup>4</sup>

National sentiment concerning city planning and conservation clearly influenced the events in Washington, D. C. which led to the creation of Rock Creek Park. However, the campaign that led to the creation of the park in 1890 originated with prominent local businessmen and achieved success largely because of their efforts. Therefore, this narrative also highlights the

contributions of these civic leaders and the local conditions which influenced enactment of the legislation establishing Washington's largest park.

### Legislative Background to the Creation of Rock Creek Park

The legislative origins of Rock Creek Park can be traced to the interest of the U. S. Senate in providing a new residence for the president. The initiative had been inspired by the unhealthy character of the property in the vicinity of the Executive mansion. The Washington City Canal, which once ran along what today is Constitution Avenue, was an open sewer by the 1860s. In 1866 the outlet for this waterway into the nearby Potomac River was located just below the Executive mansion (the Potomac Flats were not reclaimed until the 1880s), at Seventeenth Street. President and Mrs. Lincoln often removed to a cottage at the Soldier's Home to escape the stench, heat, and contagion of the city. In 1864 Mrs. Lincoln advocated the construction of a new residence for the president on the grounds of the Soldiers Home. B. B. French, the Commissioner of Public Buildings, agreed that the cost of repair of the old mansion would be higher than construction of a new house. He also gave his opinion that the existing building was unfit for occupation. However, no action was taken by Congress on French's recommendation until after the Civil War.<sup>5</sup>

On June 25, 1866, a resolution submitted by Senator Luke P. Poland (R-VT), directed the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds "to inquire whether a tract of land of not less than three hundred and fifty acres adjoining or very near the city, can be obtained for a reasonable price for a park and site for a presidential mansion, which shall combine convenience of access, healthfulness, good water, and capability of adornment." Five days later, a similar resolution was passed by the Senate, but it limited the land area of the proposed site to one hundred acres. The resolutions were referred to the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds and resulted in the appointment of Major Nathaniel Michler to examine the topography of the region and to report his recommendations.<sup>6</sup>

In a report submitted in 1867, Michler interpreted his directive as a call to treat the park and executive mansion as separate subjects. He enthusiastically endorsed the construction of a new Executive mansion at a number of choice suburban locations, and subsequently prepared plans for a building. As late as 1870 Michler sought advice from architects concerning

potential construction costs. However, President and Mrs. Grant revered the building's historical tradition and, even though the house was considered old fashioned and woefully inadequate for accommodation of state and private quarters, they had no interest in the engineer's proposal. The project floundered and Michler's drawings for the house have subsequently been lost.<sup>7</sup>

Michler's report defining the potential land area for a park in the District of Columbia had more permanence. His survey maps and essay remain extant and proved to be documents which helped inspire the conservation, enhancement, and public use of the Rock Creek Valley. The engineer's romantic prose has often been quoted by succeeding generations of civic activists and historians attempting to establish, preserve, and foster public appreciation of the park. Michler's projection of a grand urban park in Washington on a scale that could be favorably compared to the green spaces of London, Liverpool, Dublin, Paris, Vienna, and Munich was inspirational to a later generation of civic minded businessmen who successfully lobbied for creation of the park. City Beautiful proponents at the turn of the century hailed Michler's prescience in their efforts to promote the improvement and integration of the valley into a citywide park system.<sup>8</sup>

Michler's ideas concerning the dimensions and character of Rock Creek Park proposal differed from the park created in 1890. He outlined two spatial alternatives for the park in his report to the Senate committee. One scheme proposed 2,540 acres and the other a more modest undertaking of 1,800 acres. Either plan necessitated the acquisition by the federal government of a large section of prime suburban real estate in northwest Washington. The park's rough northern limits as originally proposed would have been the line of "historical" fortifications between Tenleytown Road (Wisconsin Avenue) and the Seventh Street Turnpike (Georgia Avenue), including Forts Reno, Kearney, DeRussy, and Stevens. The southern boundary was the Cliffburne estate of Mrs. S. R. Hobbie, situated just below the present National Zoological Park grounds. Michler's park proposal included an ambitious long-term improvement scheme at an estimated cost of \$100,000. Playgrounds, parade grounds, miles of bridle and carriage paths, lakes for boating and skating, botanical and zoological grounds encompassing "a variety of scenery, a happy combination of the beautiful and the picturesque," were envisioned in the plan.<sup>9</sup>

Michler's park proposal was evidently a large-scale version of New York's Central Park, which he called "the most important work of its kind

undertaken in America." His description of plans to mix formality and naturalism in the landscape, to separate functionally circulation systems, active recreation areas, and pastoral scenery for repose, to preserve natural scenic beauty, and to promote the restorative psychological powers of the park echoed Frederick Law Olmsted's park design philosophy. Yet Michler also explained that the Rock Creek valley already possessed the qualities of a magnificent park and all that remained to be accomplished was improvement of public access and enhancement of nature by the "engineer and artist."<sup>10</sup>

Michler's recommendations were enthusiastically received by Senator Benjamin Gratz Brown (D-MO), chairman of the Senate Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, who subsequently sponsored a bill in 1867 to create a park based on the engineer's survey work. The Senator was a liberal Republican turned Democrat who was an early advocate of universal suffrage and such reforms as an eight-hour work day and a civil service merit system for government workers. In a speech delivered to the Senate concerning his bill, Brown rhapsodized about the beauty of Rock Creek Valley and its restorative psychological powers. However, the bill was ultimately tabled and House action on the measure was not forthcoming during this session of Congress. A strong willed and outspoken man, Brown might have succeeded in obtaining the park legislation had he remained in the Senate. However, he ended his term in 1867, and a new champion for Rock Creek Park legislation did not appear in Congress until the 1880s. After his Senate service, Brown's political career led him back to Missouri where he was elected governor in 1871 and selected as Horace Greeley's running mate in 1872.<sup>11</sup>

Although Michler and Senator Brown both advised the immediate public acquisition of the Rock Creek Valley before "costly suburban villas" encroached on the acreage, Congress did not heed the warning.<sup>12</sup> For the next two decades major public works projects focused largely on central Washington. Street paving, dredging the Potomac River, harbor construction, erection of new government office buildings, laying gas and sewer mains, and extension and improvement of the city's water supply were considered most vital to the development of the national capital. Parks were not ignored and the Mall and smaller reservations throughout the city were significantly improved in the 1880s. Reclamation of the Potomac Flats began in 1882 and, largely because of the efforts of Charles C. Glover, became a major addition to the city's park system in 1897. Renewed interest in Michler's Rock Creek Park proposal

stemmed from the maturation of a public works program that created modern Washington. By 1890 the large scale public works projects of the Army Corps of Engineers had created the modern floodproof city and insured "the future desirability of the city for residential purposes in terms of clean water, the continuous system of parklands and public edifices with which a nationwide citizenry could identify."<sup>13</sup>

In 1883 Captain Richard L. Hoxie, assistant engineer commissioner of the District of Columbia, proposed a plan to create a massive reservoir in the Rock Creek Valley. His idea was to build a dam above Georgetown creating a water catchment area encompassing 1,300 acres backing the creek four miles up the valley. Hoxie's proposal was a logical development, given the keen public interest in engineering plans to provide Washington with a plentiful source of clean water and a modern sewer system. To this end, Hoxie advised the federal government to acquire the entire watershed area of Rock Creek within the District of Columbia and to create a lakeside park around the reservoir of "great natural beauty." If implemented, the planned reservoir would have entirely inundated the land area of the National Zoological Park and the sites of the Pierce and Blagden Mills.<sup>14</sup>

The renewal of interest in the creation of a major urban park in Washington in the 1880s was also a product of growing public health concerns. Eradication of waterborne diseases, especially typhoid, was a vigorous reform movement in all major American cities in this decade. In 1879 the sewers in Georgetown and Northwest Washington emptied into Rock Creek.<sup>15</sup> By 1889 the pollution of Rock Creek was considered a serious threat to public health. Evening Star editor Crosby Noyes graphically remarked:

The necessity of immediate action in the matter is caused by the danger that inroads may be made upon the magnificent forest growth of the region, and that the valley, if not speedily secured by the government, will be occupied for purposes that will convert it from a "thing of beauty, a joy forever," into a dangerous nuisance in the shape of foul open sewer, lined with a succession of slaughterhouses, breweries, dye-houses, hog-pens, privies, & c., polluting the creek with their excrement.<sup>16</sup>

Noyes's fears were not unfounded because in the previous year the District Commissioners had presented a proposal in their annual report to deflect a noxious section of lower Rock Creek through a tunnel from O Street to

Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W. The type of establishments Noyes described had been built along this section of the creek. The major benefit of this massive arched tunnel would have been a land connection between Georgetown and Washington, thus eliminating the need for bridge construction. The commissioners reasoned that the tunnel and a landfill at this point of Rock Creek would also provide "a dumping ground for grading in neighboring parts of the District, and it will enable the serious question of the sewage problem of the creek to be treated in a satisfactory manner."<sup>17</sup> However, the plan aroused sharp opposition from the Washington architectural profession. The architects opposed the conversion of a section of the creek into a sewer tunnel and landfill. The project never gained widespread public support and debate over the issue of infilling the valley continued for a generation. Eventually the proposal was abandoned and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was established in 1913 to connect the Potomac and Rock Creek Valley parks.<sup>18</sup>

The pollution threat to the Rock Creek Valley grew steadily as suburban communities flourished along Fourteenth Street Road in Washington county. This was evident in an 1885 report on the city's infrastructure by the Engineer Department that noted "urgent calls for sewerage facilities" from the Mount Pleasant, Columbia Heights, and Meridian Hill neighborhoods.<sup>19</sup> After the Civil War, park advocates throughout the country had absorbed sanitary reform ideas and proposals and soon began to promote open green space as an essential part of the city's general health program. Park planners in Chicago, Boston, and New York City were presenting potent arguments for the establishment of new parks based on scientific theories and bolstered by mortality tables and vital statistics.<sup>20</sup> Conditions in Washington in the 1880s reflected widespread urban public health problems. In 1881 only one third of the city's houses were connected to sewers. Wells and springs were still commonly in use and often became contaminated.<sup>21</sup> The Medical Society of the District of Columbia prepared a detailed survey of the past causes of the city's contagious diseases in the early 1890s. This study prompted the doctors to submit an extensive report to Congress in 1894 on Washington's sanitation. The document caused immediate enactment of legislation by Congress requiring all houses in the District to be connected to the city's water supply and sewerage systems.<sup>22</sup>

A final and vital component of the movement that established Rock Creek Park was the formation of an effective lobbying effort by the city's

business elite. These men had substantial influence in Congress by virtue of their legal, financial, and social connections. In 1883 a group of prominent Washingtonians, represented by banker and arts patron William Wilson Corcoran, Justice William Strong, and Josiah Dent, wrote to the District Commissioners and urged city officials to obtain congressional approval for the creation of Rock Creek Park. The following year Senator Thomas F. Bayard of (D-DE) introduced a resolution calling for a joint committee of five House members and three senators to review the Michler report, make additional surveys under the direction of the Secretary of War, and report their findings at the next session of the Congress. In his remarks, Bayard noted that he introduced the park measure on the recommendation "of gentleman well known to us all, large property owners, men of intelligence, of character, and cultivation in the city . . ." Bayard also enlisted Frederick Law Olmsted to promote interest in the park and to prepare the preamble for the resolution. The resolution was roundly approved by the Senate in 1884, but the House took no action on the matter.<sup>23</sup> Like the park's bill's first champion, B. Gratz Brown, Bayard left the Senate to further his political career. He later became Secretary of State during the first Cleveland administration (1885-1889), and served as ambassador to Great Britain (1893-1897).<sup>24</sup>

In the first session of the 49th Congress, the sponsorship of the park legislation was taken up by Senator John J. Ingalls (R-KS), a famous orator noted for his sharp tongue.<sup>25</sup> He introduced a bill on June 2, 1886, that proposed to authorize the D. C. Commissioners to condemn land for a Rock Creek Park, the boundary of which was limited to a 1,000 feet width along the banks of the waterway from Massachusetts Avenue to the District line. The park measure was again approved by the Senate and was referred to and recommended by the House committee on the District of Columbia. However, the Senate legislation was not called up for a vote in the House and died again in that session. Ingalls persisted and in the 50th Congress reintroduced a park bill in the Senate. A House companion bill, sponsored by Representative Jonathan R. Rowell (R-IL), was also submitted. South Carolina Democrat John J. Hemphill became the bill's most outspoken proponent and his motion brought the bill to the House floor for a vote on August 13, 1888. The Rowell bill differed from Ingalls's Senate version because it directed the D. C. Commissioners to prepare a new survey map of the proposed park, to record it with the registrar of deeds, and to condemn the property without payment

until such time that Congress approved an appropriation. Hemphill argued that the bill was merely a fact-finding measure placing no obligation on Congress. He also downplayed potential costs by noting that several major owners in the valley were willing to donate land for the park.<sup>26</sup> In an 1887 article that expressed frustration with the House's intransigency on the park issue, the Evening Star related that the District commissioners had letters on file from Joshua P. Kingle, Hiram D. Walbridge, A. P. Brown, and W. M. Dunn offering to donate property in the Rock Creek Valley for park purposes.<sup>27</sup>

The House's reluctance to pass the park legislation stemmed from the members' age-old hostility toward expenditure of public monies to fund what they perceived as improvements of a purely "local" nature. These opponents weakened the Rowell bill with so many amendments that Hemphill requested and obtained its recommittal to the House Committee on the District of Columbia for revision.<sup>28</sup> Pent up frustration over the repeated legislative failures and caustic negative remarks by Representative Lewis Payson of Illinois alleging that the park proposal was a calculated boon to local real estate speculators, sparked a popular backlash that the Evening Star described as "an uprising of citizens" in the winter of 1888-1889.<sup>29</sup>

The leader of this revived movement to establish the park was Charles C. Glover, a man of wealth and social prominence who was at the time a partner in the banking firm of Riggs and Company. This firm was expanded in 1896 and became Riggs National Bank. Glover also had extensive financial interests in streetcar and fire insurance companies and was president of the Washington Stock Exchange between 1883 and 1890. A power in national financial circles and known for his fiery temper, Glover was determined to see the park created. In a now famous event, Glover invited friends on a Thanksgiving Day outing to tour the Rock Creek valley. Glover and his guests, engineer commissioner Captain Thomas W. Symonds, lawyer Calderon Carlisle, and bank partners James M. Johnson and Thomas Hyde, formed a pact to mount a full-scale effort to obtain the park. Glover directed the drafting of a new Rock Creek park bill by Johnson and Carlisle and then launched a concerted lobbying campaign to influence the House members in opposition to the park. He opened the campaign with a meeting at his house a few days after the Thanksgiving day reconnaissance outing and obtained the support of a cadre of powerful supporters including a propagandist for the campaign, Evening Star editor Crosby Noyes, and a host of other socially

prominent businessmen. Next came a highly publicized citizen's meeting at the Atlantic Building on F Street on January 11, 1889. Noyes presided over the meeting, which elected an executive committee composed of Glover and Noyes, Alexander T. Britton, George E. Lemon, Frank A. Richardson and Brainard H. Warner. Glover was elected chairman and was the "leading spirit" of the campaign.<sup>30</sup>

The executive committee was a powerful brain trust with economic and political connections. Britton was a nationally respected lawyer who specialized in land and railway law. He was also president of the American Security and Trust Company and vice-president of Columbia National Bank. Lemon was also a lawyer who was well known to Congress as a legal advisor concerning pensions and claims cases. He was also the founder of the widely read National Tribune and had extensive real estate holdings in Washington. Frank A. Richardson was a correspondent for the Baltimore Sun who had covered political affairs in the national capital for more than twenty years and was highly respected by members of Congress. Brainard H. Warner was an "unknown country boy" when he came to Washington, but by 1890 at age forty-two was a resident of Washington's "millionaire's row" on Massachusetts Avenue. Warner began selling real estate after graduating from Columbian Law School (George Washington University) in 1869 and eventually started his own company. By 1889 he was the proprietor of the largest real estate company in the city and president of the Columbia National Bank and Washington Loan and Trust Company, then financial powers in the city. The citizen's executive committee used their legal expertise, influence as financial brokers, and social position to persuade Congress to enact the park bill.<sup>31</sup> The panel's work was described by the Evening Star in this fashion:

[The committee held] hearings before the Congressional committees and through its spokesman presented the facts clearly and impressively. Thus far its work was apparent to the public. In private it was a committee on education, a bureau of information, a body of propagandists. No lobby ever organized did more effective work under the stimulus of expected gains than did this committee of a half dozen citizens unselfishly working in a patriotic cause.<sup>32</sup>

With the boost from Glover, Congressman Hemphill once again tried to convince his colleagues in the House to reconsider a Rock Creek park bill. He introduced the new legislation in January, 1889, which emphasized the

aesthetic and public health benefits to be gained by the city if the bill were enacted. The House again refused to consider the bill. Hemphill tried but was unsuccessful in his efforts to attach the park measure as an amendment to the pending National Zoological Park legislation, enacted on March 2, 1889.<sup>33</sup> No antagonism existed between the supporters of the two park projects. In fact, the sentiment for creating Rock Creek Park helped secure the Zoological park. During deliberations over the issue, a compromise was reached with park opponents who voted for the smaller Zoological park in exchange for the omission of the amendment establishing Rock Creek Park. The establishment of the National Zoological Park proved vital to the Rock Creek Park campaign because it focused public attention on the beauty of the region and revealed the imminent threat of real estate development to the valley.<sup>34</sup>

The key to the eventual victory was Glover's tenacity and his ability to persuade powerful Senator John Sherman (R-OH) to sponsor new park legislation. Sherman was the older brother of Civil War General William T. Sherman and a highly respected figure in the Senate. By 1890 he had served as chairman of both the House Ways and Means Committee (1859-1861) and Senate Finance Committee(1867-1877) and had been appointed Secretary of the Treasury (1877-1881) in the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes. In the 1890s Sherman would serve as Secretary of State (1897-1898) under William McKinley. Other bills sponsored by Sherman in the 51st Congress that were enacted in 1890, such as the Sherman Antitrust Act and Sherman Silver Purchase Act, reflected the senator's authority on national financial issues and his leadership position in Congress at that time.<sup>35</sup>

Sherman's version of the Rock Creek park legislation was passed by the Senate on January 28, 1890, and sent to the House. In considering the bill the House made amendments changing the designation of the park to "Columbus Memorial" Park to honor the forthcoming quadricentennial of Columbus's voyage of discovery to America. The bill also was amended to provide that half of the park's cost and future maintenance would be defrayed by District revenues. Another controversial amendment was made during the lengthy House debate over the Senate bill. This provision required adjacent land owners who benefited financially from the park's establishment to contribute to its costs.<sup>36</sup>

It was widely known that new parks in New York City, Boston, and Chicago had raised adjoining land values and provided a stimulus to real

estate speculation. Senator Sherman, while a long-term resident of Washington, had acquired extensive real estate holdings near the periphery of Rock Creek Park. He owned and subdivided several large tracts, such as Meridian Hill (1867), Sherman's Subdivision (1868), and Columbia Heights (1882). Sherman also acquired substantial development interests in Cleveland Park (1892).<sup>37</sup> It is not surprising that his colleagues in the House were suspicious of Sherman's motives in sponsoring the park bill. Representative Francis B. Spinola (D-NY), an ardent opponent of Rock Creek Park, voiced this position:

"There are a great many peculiar rumors about in regard to our Senators," remarked the speaker. "They are all honorable men, I admit; nevertheless they are human, if rumors can be believed, and their humanity is like that found in other men. They are fond of finding the tender spots of the earth where they can invest their surplus capital, and the amount invested in this city, if rumor can be relied on, will run up into the millions."<sup>38</sup>

When asked by Representative Louis E. Atkinson (R-PA) if he was aware that popular sentiment and every newspaper in the city supported the park's creation, Spinola retorted: "Undoubtedly the newspapers are in favor of it; they expect to get 'some of the pork' themselves." When pressed by Atkinson to reveal the source for this accusation, Spinola backed down and said his knowledge was based on common sense.<sup>39</sup> The bill came up for a vote in April and was narrowly defeated. Yet park advocates pressed the issue and on May 26, 1890, the measure, on the motion of Representative Hemphill, was again considered by the House. This time it passed 107 to 82. A conference committee later reconciled the House and Senate versions of the bill. The Senate maintained the designation as "Rock Creek Park." The House retained what some considered to be punitive requirements that the District share one half of the park's cost and that tax assessments would be levied on neighboring landowners benefiting from the park's location. Finally, a bill establishing Rock Creek Park was approved by both houses of Congress and signed into law by President Benjamin Harrison on September 27, 1890.<sup>40</sup>

The law establishing Rock Creek Park set a limit of 2,000 acres for the land area with an appropriation of \$1,200,000, equal portions to be paid out of District revenues and the U. S. Treasury. A rough southern boundary was established at Klingle Ford Bridge, and the law specified limits of 600 to

1200 feet for the park's width below Broad Branch and Blagden Mill Roads. This provision accounts for the reservation's parkway character in the neck of land that today forms the southern tip of the park. The width of the park's remaining boundaries was left to the discretion of the Rock Creek Park Commissioners. These officials were the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, and three citizens appointed by the president with the advice and consent of the Senate. The remaining sections of the act explained the duties of the commission and outlined condemnation, appraisal, and benefit assessment procedures. The final provision placed the new park under the joint control of the D. C. Commissioners and the Chief of Engineers of the U. S. Army. "whose duty it shall be as soon as practicable, to lay out and prepare roadways and bridle paths...."<sup>41</sup>

### The Rock Creek Park Commission

The legal responsibility of locating the boundaries and purchasing the land for Rock Creek Park rested with the Rock Creek Park Commission. This body included General Thomas A. Casey, Chief of Engineers of the U. S. Army, and Lieutenant Colonel Henry Robert, the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia. Both of these officials were appointed from the ranks of the Army engineer corps by virtue of their position as superintendents of federal and municipal public works projects in the capital. This responsibility was held by the Army's engineer corps with varying degrees of authority between 1867 and the beginning of home rule in 1974.<sup>42</sup> Casey was a graduate of West Point and a distinguished engineer who directed the completion of the Washington Monument and superintended the construction of the Old Executive Office Building and the Library of Congress. Robert, like Casey, had attended the Military Academy at West Point. He was a bespectled, scholarly man with noted abilities as a military engineer, who had worked on the capital's Civil War fortifications in 1861. The executive officer to the commission was Captain William T. Rossell, the assistant Engineer Commissioner of the District, who also had charge of the city's public roads. An energetic young officer of "commanding presence," Rossell had distinguished himself as an assistant professor of engineering at the Military Academy and on field assignments in New York, Florida, and Mississippi.<sup>43</sup>

In addition to the military officers, the commission included three civilians, the Smithsonian Institution's Secretary Samuel P. Langley, attorney Richard Ross Perry, and journalist and retired army officer General Henry Van Ness Boynton. Langley was a Boston native who was an esteemed scientist. He also had training and expertise in civil engineering and architecture. Langley was appointed to the Commission principally because of his organizational skill and his valued knowledge of the terrain of the Rock Creek Valley. He had been instrumental to the acquisition and location of the National Zoological Park in 1889 and had extensively studied the geographical area considered for the new park.

Perry was considered a key appointment because of his respected legal mind and his reputation in Washington as a man of energy whose selection meant "there will be no lagging in the work."<sup>44</sup> He was the only native Washingtonian on the commission. Perry was graduated from Georgetown Law School in 1864, received his master's degree in 1865, and finished his legal education studying civil law in Paris. At the time of his appointment he was a faculty member of the law school at Georgetown and a leading practitioner of civil law in the national capital. General Boynton was a Massachusetts native who was raised in Cincinnati, Ohio and trained as a civil engineer. During the Civil War he commanded the 35th Ohio Infantry at the battles of Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, and Buzzard's Roost. He was breveted as a Brigadier General after meritorious service at Missionary Ridge where he was grievously wounded. Boynton resigned from the Army as result of his injuries and after the War settled in Washington, D. C., where he began a new career as chief political correspondent for the Cincinnati Gazette. He was an active member of the citizens group organized by Glover to promote the passage of legislation establishing Rock Creek Park.<sup>45</sup> Together the Rock Creek Park Commission was a talented group who were well-equipped to select the required parkland and to promote public support of the enterprise.

The commissioners held their organizational meeting on October 2, 1890, and elected General Casey as chairman. During the month of October, the commissioners examined the land area in which they would place Rock Creek Park. Initially there was indecision over whether the park should extend to the District boundary or be located in a shorter, wider area.<sup>46</sup> Captain Rossell prepared preliminary maps for the two different schemes, and after a series of field trips the group determined the eventual dimensional character of

the park.<sup>47</sup> The first site visit in the Rock Creek valley was undertaken on October 18, 1890. The proceedings of the Commission recorded the day's work:

After going down the Linnean Hill Road, the Pierce Mill Road, and crossing Rock Creek as Shoemaker's mill, they followed up Broad Branch Road turning to the Blagden Mill and made an examination on foot into the woods. Returning to the carriages they continued out along the Broad Branch Road to the Daniel's Road and from there nearly to the District line. They visited Fort DeRussy and on reaching the crossing of Rock Creek by the Military Road, again left the carriages and preceded southerly along the Creek on the banks, where they held a meeting, at which it was decided that the next meeting should be held on Wednesday October 22.<sup>48</sup>

This official description of the Commission's first exploratory trip was not the only record of the day's outing left to posterity. An Evening Star reporter was an uninvited member of the survey party and followed the commissioners' horse drawn buggies on a bicycle from General Casey's house at 1419 K Street, N. W. out into the proposed park. The reporter noted the Commission's presence was not well received by John Willis, who had a greenhouse on the east bank of Rock Creek at a point near the outlet of Broad Branch. Willis watched forlornly as the carriages passed his property off Blagden Mill Road and confided to the reporter that "his place was gone sure." At the Blagden Mill ruins the party left their carriages and hiked up into the woods to a promontory in the vicinity of Crystal Springs. Here General Boynton was accosted by a pack of dogs until the owners, several teamsters hauling dirt in the area, "kicked them into a state of ill-natured and growling subjugation." The disturbance did not deter Boynton from extolling the beauty of this area of the valley, but the reporter was not charmed by the scenery after a difficult ride along the steep and muddy roads of the future park. He sarcastically remarked that there "was no more enthusiastic member of the Commission than General Casey, who continually looked for scenic effects, never failed to find them, and was always ejaculating: 'Beautiful, beautiful'." The commission continued their journey with a long drive up Broad Branch and Daniels Roads, and just after noon the party clambered up the earthworks of Fort DeRussy. The reporter noted that the fort would be preserved in the new park and that as he left the group General Casey "was putting the gesticulations into a wartime story with a big map, rolled tightly and held in one hand."<sup>49</sup>

On October 22 the commission once again ventured into the Rock Creek valley to inspect the land in the northwest sector of the proposed park. On the morning of October 25, Langley, Boynton, and Perry rode on horseback to the parkland above Military Road. They followed Rock Creek from the District Boundary to the Fenwick farm on the northeast corner of the proposed park and then rode southwest down the crest of a hill to Daniels Road. They entered the valley on Military Road, followed the creek to Blagden's Mill, and returned to town. That afternoon the Commission set the rough boundaries for the park above Blagden's Mill. It was decided that the eastern boundary would be the western line of Sixteenth Street from the mill to the District line. The western boundary was set on the eastern line of Broad Branch and Daniels Road. At this meeting Boynton, Perry, and Langley were delegated the task of examining and preparing recommendations for the boundaries of the narrow portion of the park below Blagden's Mill. On November 1, 1890, the commission tentatively set the remaining boundary lines of the park. Revisions were made on December 2 after a preliminary map had been prepared by Captain Rossell and his staff. In January a map "showing the boundaries of the entire Park and such of the interior property lines as were then drawn" was approved and a resolution was passed to have the property valuations of "permanent improvements" compiled. By March, 1891, this work had been completed and in April the map and valuations were transmitted to the President of the United States and the D.C. Recorder of Deeds.<sup>50</sup>

On March 14, 1891, the Evening Star published a facsimile of the park map and a glowing report of the beauty of the selected land area. Yet the enthusiasm of the article was tempered by the realization that land purchases would be difficult:

The map that Capt. Rossell has prepared, a copy of which is given above, represents a strip of land about 1,960 acres in extent, running along either side of Rock Creek and containing some of the most beautiful stretches of landscape along that picturesque stream. It will very likely be possible to acquire that much land for that much money [\$1,200,000], but nobody thinks that it can be done without going to law about it. Nothing could be more secret than the results of the deliberations of that same valuation committee, but at the same time it would not be such a very rash guess to name \$500 as the average price per acre that will be offered for the land.<sup>51</sup>

The commissioners must have realized they were stretching the Congressional appropriation to its limits in the land purchasing plan. In April, before negotiations began with the owners, the Commission requested advice from the Attorney General concerning the legality of exceeding the appropriation. His response was a bluntly negative letter that stated only further Congressional action would validate any excess expenditure.<sup>52</sup> The commissioners met with the property owners on April 30 and May 4, 1891. One by one these individuals were interviewed concerning compensation for their land. Most owners stated that they wanted reimbursement for what they had paid for the land, plus the valuation of improvements.<sup>53</sup> Few were willing to accept the Commission's offer and some owners bitterly opposed the acquisition of their property. In fact, one week after receiving the letter informing owners of the hearings concerning plans to purchase their land, some began cutting timber on their property. An injunction was obtained to prevent further destruction of vegetation and two special policemen were hired to patrol the region.<sup>54</sup> Some owners claimed that their constitutional rights had been violated and fought the land acquisition in court. Others, like Pierce Shoemaker and Cornelia Truesdell, claimed that their lands were undervalued because of its gold-bearing potential. The court ruled against these owners in July, 1891 and government appraisers apparently dismissed appreciable claims of precious mineral deposits because subsequent court-approved valuations did not favor the owners.<sup>55</sup>

The commission was unable to come to terms with all but two of the owners in the period mandated by the park legislation. They subsequently requested and obtained a court appointed appraisement committee to resolve the impasse over property values. This committee set the value of the proposed park lands at \$230,000 above the Congressional appropriation. Afterwards, the Commission restudied the boundary and omitted approximately 300 acres, largely taken from the northeast section of the proposed park. This action created the irregular northern boundary of the Rock Creek Park and today Rock Creek Gardens and Colonial Village occupy this proposed park land west of Sixteenth Street near the District line. On December 13, 1894, the Commission transferred administration of the park over to the Rock Creek Board of Control, and on January 1, 1895, this body assumed responsibility for the new park, which consisted of 1,605.976 acres purchased for \$1,740,511.45.<sup>56</sup>

The final duty of the Rock Creek Park Commission was the unpleasant task of assessing neighboring landowners for monetary benefits accrued by the location of the park adjacent to their property. This provision was a controversial section of the act and the commission immediately faced litigation in their attempt to assess the appreciation of adjoining lands. An attempt was made in 1895 to assess an appreciation to the Van Risiwick estate by virtue of its location and outlook on to the park. This action led to prolonged litigation and, although the commission's position was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1898, it may have deterred further assessments. It was decided at subsequent hearings by the commission that assessments were not warranted because the park in its unimproved state had caused no appreciable increases in adjoining land value. With this decision the work of the Rock Creek Park Commission had effectively ended.<sup>57</sup>

After the Rock Creek Park Commission completed its purchase of the land, responsibility for the management and improvement of the park was transferred to the Rock Creek Board of Control, as mandated in section 7 of the 1890 legislation. This body, composed of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia and the Chief of Engineers of the United States Army, became the official caretakers of Rock Creek Park until 1918. The District commissioners were a three-member presidentially appointed board. This body administered municipal affairs in Washington from 1878 until the enactment of Home Rule Act in 1974. One member of the D. C. Commission was always a military engineer, who controlled all contracts for municipal public works and building in the city. The remaining District commissioners were civilians, usually prominent local lawyers or businessmen. The Chief of Engineers of the Army was also an important official with responsibility for the superintendence of major federal public works projects and maintenance of many government buildings and park reservations in the national capital. The daily operations of the park's administration were delegated to the Board's executive officer who functioned as a park superintendent. Captain Gustav Fieburger was the first individual to hold this post.<sup>58</sup>

The establishment of Rock Creek Park proved to be vital to the future development of the national capital. The fight to establish the park had united a body of civic-minded businessmen dedicated to the city's economic improvement and residential desirability. At the height of the lobbying campaign to establish Rock Creek Park in November, 1889, a new

organization of businessmen called the Washington Board of Trade was founded. Beriah Wilkins, a former Congressman from Ohio, was largely responsible for creating this civic group. Wilkins heartily endorsed Glover's efforts on behalf of Rock Creek Park and delivered one of the keynote speeches at the highly publicized 1889 citizen's rally in support of the proposed legislation. Prominent members of the Board's directorate and its first presidents were the familiar names of Charles C. Glover, Crosby H. Noyes, and Brainard H. Warner. In addition, many of the Board of Trade's charter members were drawn from the ranks of the businessmen brought together to lobby for the creation of Rock Creek Park.<sup>59</sup>

Between 1890 and 1911 the Board of Trade excercised more power in Washington than any other body with the exception of Congress and the D. C. Commissioners. Their principal goal was to strengthen the economy of the capital, but they viewed urban aesthetics, paticularly park development, as vital asset to the residential city. The members of the Board of Trade were strong supporters of the expansion and development of Washington's park system and later proposed that the city's 1900 centennial be commemorated by the establishment of a citywide park system. They became important advocates of the "City Beautiful" movement in Washington and many of their ideas were later adopted by the Senate Park Commission and U. S. Commission of Fine Arts.<sup>60</sup>

The establishment of Rock Creek Park was also a signal event in the history of conservation in that it was, according to Rock Creek Park historian Barry Mackintosh, "part of the first post-Yellowstone influx of natural parks established by the federal government." It was created in 1890, the same year Congress authorized California's Sequoia, General Grant, and Yosemite national parks. Although Rock Creek Park did not approach the scale of these vast wilderness preserves and lacked the "national" title, it was created to preserve irreplaceable natural resources and remains today an urban gem within the National Park System.<sup>61</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Galen Cranz, The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1982), pp. 3-59.

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<sup>2</sup>David Schuyler, The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth Century America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), pp. 2-8.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-8. Also Laura Wood Roper, FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). For a discussion of the work of Olmsted, Jr. in Washington, see Frederick Gutheim and Wilcomb E. Washburn, Federal City: Plans and Realities (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1976); and also Susan L. Klaus, "Intelligent and Comprehensive Planning of a Common Sense Kind": Frederick Law Olmsted, Junior and the Emergence of Comprehensive Planning in America, 1900-1920." (M. A. Thesis, George Washington University, 1988).

<sup>4</sup>See Barry Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History (Washington: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1985), pp. 13-15 and 123-125. Mackintosh's study of Rock Creek Park is the most thorough and accessible source of information on the political history of the park. His appendix reproduces all pertinent federal legislation related to the reservation.

<sup>5</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 1-2; and see also William Seale, The President's House (Washington: White Historical Association, 1986), Vol. I, pp. 450-452.

<sup>6</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup>Seale, The President's House, pp. 450-452.

<sup>8</sup>Michler's report has been quoted extensively or reprinted on many occasions by historians and journalists. Influential examples include newspaper pieces recording the establishment or development of the park, see Evening Star (Washington), October 4, 1890 and August 9, 1909. For interest in the report during the City Beautiful era, see William V. Cox, "Notes on the Establishment of a National Park in the District of Columbia and the Acquisition and Improvement of the Valley of Rock Creek for Park Purposes," in Charles Moore, ed., Park Improvement Papers: A Series of Twenty Papers Relating to the Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), pp. 99-140; and Report of the Secretary of the Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907), pp. 3-5. For an example of the local historian's continued interest in Michler, see John Clagett Proctor, "How Rock Creek Park Had Its Beginning," Evening Star (Washington), August 4, 1945. For a contemporary study of Michler, also see Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 2-4. Michler's survey report was conveyed in a letter to Senator B. Gratz Brown in Senate Misc. Doc. 21, 39th Congress, 2d Session, February 13, 1867. It is reprinted in the appendix of Cox's articles cited above. The maps accompanying the survey are located in RG 77, File-113-2, "Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington, D. C., 1866," Cartographic Branch, National Archives, Alexandria, Virginia; and "Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington (Survey of locality for

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public park and site for a presidential mansion.), 1866," Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>9</sup>Cox, "Notes on the Establishment of a National Park in the District of Columbia..." Park Improvement Papers, pp. 114-120; RG 77, File-113-2, "Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington, D. C., 1866," Cartographic Branch, NARA, Alexandria, Virginia.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., also see Mackintosh, pp. 2-4. Olmsted's park design philosophy is summarized by Charles E. Beveridge, "Frederick Law Olmsted," in William H. Tishler, ed., American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places (Washington: The Preservation Press, 1988), pp. 38-41.

<sup>11</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 2-6; also Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1989), p. 680. Also see Dan and Inez Morris, Who Was Who in American Politics (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1974), p. 115.

<sup>12</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 4-5.

<sup>13</sup>Frederick Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), pp. 82-98. Quotation taken from p. 90.

<sup>14</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 7; For Hoxie's report and map, see Annual Report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), pp. 270-274.

<sup>15</sup>For information on this national urban reform movement and American sanitation in the 1880s, see Jon A. Peterson, "The Impact of Sanitary Reform upon American City Planning, 1840-1890" Journal of Social History 13 (Fall 1979), pp. 89-103; Stanley K. Schultz and Clay McShane, "To Engineer the Metropolis: Sewers, Sanitation, and City Planning," Journal of American History 65 (September 1978), pp. 389-411; and for the condition of Washington's sewer system at this time, see Constance M. Green, Washington: A History of the Capital, 1800-1950 (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1962; paperback reprint edition, 1976), Vol. 2, pp. 43-45.

<sup>16</sup>Evening Star (Washington), January 11, 1889; see also Noyes's editorials of December 29, 1889 and May 13, 1890.

<sup>17</sup>Evening Star (Washington), February 14, 1888.

<sup>18</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 50-51; Jere L. Krakow, Historic Resource Study: Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway (Draft), Unpublished manuscript, on File at the Denver Service Center, National Park Service, pp. 15-17. One of the most outspoken critics of this plan was Washington architect Glenn Brown. Brown credited this 1888 project proposal as the inspiration for his "crusade for artistic Washington," which eventually placed responsibility for the planning of the city into the hands of professional architects. See William B. Bushong, "Glenn Brown, the American Institute of

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Architects, and the Development of the Civic Core of Washington, D. C." (Ph.d. Dissertation, George Washington University, 1988), chapters 3 and 5.

<sup>19</sup>Annual Report of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885), p. 122.

<sup>20</sup>Jon A. Peterson, "The Origins of the Comprehensive Planning Ideal in the United States, 1840-1911" (Ph.d. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1967), pp. 106-107.

<sup>21</sup>Green, Washington, Vol. 2, pp. 43-45.

<sup>22</sup>Samuel C. Busey, "The History and Progress of Sanitation in the City of Washington and the Efforts of the Medical Profession in Relation Thereto" Sanitarian, 42 (March 1899), pp 205-216.

<sup>23</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 7-8.

<sup>24</sup>Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989, p. 591; and Dan and Inez Morris, Who Was Who in American Politics, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup>Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989, p. 1242; and Dan and Inez Morris, Who Was Who in American Politics, p. 340.

<sup>26</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 8-10.

<sup>27</sup>Evening Star (Washington), November 12, 1887.

<sup>28</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 8-10.

<sup>29</sup>Evening Star (Washington), October 4, 1890.

<sup>30</sup>Cornelius W. Heine, "The Contributions of Charles Carroll Glover and Other Citizens to the Development of the National Capital" Records of the Columbia Historical Society 53-56(1959), pp. 229-248; and Allen C. Clark, "Charles C. Glover" Records of the Columbia Historical Society 39 (1938), pp. 141-157. See also Evening Star (Washington), October 4, 1890.

<sup>31</sup>Evening Star (Washington), October 4, 1890. Biographical sketches of the citizen's executive committee and Rock Creek Park Commission were published as part of a collection of articles celebrating the establishment of Rock Creek Park.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 11.

<sup>34</sup>The correlation between the two park bills was discussed by Cox, "Notes on the Establishment of a National Park in the District of Columbia..." Park Improvement Papers, p. 102.

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<sup>35</sup>Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-1989, p. 1803; and Dan and Inez Morris, Who Was Who in American Politics, p. 520. See also Donald R. Kennon and Rebecca M. Rogers, The Committee on Ways and Means: A Bicentennial History, 1789-1989 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1989), pp. 138, 139-142, 188, 200, 203-204.

<sup>36</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 11-13.

<sup>37</sup>For a discussion of Sherman's real estate investments in northwest Washington, see Columbia Height's Citizen's Association, Statement of the Advantages of Beautiful Columbia Heights (Washington: Columbia Heights Citizens Association, 1904), Washingtoniana Division, D. C. Public Library, Washington, D. C. Also see Kathleen S. Wood, "Cleveland Park: Country Living in the City," in Kathryn S. Smith, ed., Washington at Home (Northridge, Ca.: Windsor Press, 1988), pp. 207-209.

<sup>38</sup>Evening Star (Washington), March 25, 1890.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid. The exchange was published with editorial comments by Noyes.

<sup>40</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 12-13.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 14-15.

<sup>42</sup>Albert E. Cowdrey, A City for the Nation: The Army Engineers and the Building of Washington, D. C., 1790-1967 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1967); and also see Gary A. Burch and Steven M. Pennington, editors, Civil Engineering Landmarks of the Nation's Capital (Washington: American Society of Civil Engineers, 1982).

<sup>43</sup>Evening Star (Washington), October 4, 1890.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Proceedings of the Rock Creek Park Commission, October 13, 1890 and December 9, 1898. Entry 238, RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C. The latter and final entry in this record book was a history of the commission's work.

<sup>47</sup>The existence of these maps was reported by the Evening Star (Washington), March 14, 1891. Lieutenant Colonel Robert was ill during the first several months of the Commission's work and did not participate in these early decisions regarding the park's boundaries.

<sup>48</sup>Proceedings of the Rock Creek Park Commission, October 18, 1890. Entry 238, RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>49</sup>Evening Star (Washington), October 18, 1890.

<sup>50</sup>Proceedings of the Rock Creek Park Commission, October 22 and 25, November 1, December 2, 1890, and January 14, March 21 and 28, and April 9 and 23, 1891. Entry 238, RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>51</sup>Evening Star (Washington), March 14, 1891.

<sup>52</sup>Proceedings of the Rock Creek Park Commission, April 9 and 23, 1891. Entry 238, RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., April 30 and May 4, 1891.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid. Evening Star (Washington), May 26, 1891.

<sup>55</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 16-18. Evening Star (Washington), October 19, 1891 and December 12, 1891.

<sup>56</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 16-18; Also see Proceedings of the Rock Creek Park Commission, December 9, 1898. Entry 238, RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid. For a discussion of the District's commissioners in this period, see Green, Washington, Vol. 2, pp. 35-36.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-34.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 13-14.

## Chapter V

### The Planning and Development of Rock Creek Park, 1890-1933.

Between Rock Creek Park's authorization in 1890 and its transfer to its present National Park Service caretakers in 1933, the modern character of the park was largely determined. Under the guidance of the military engineers, the reservation was opened to the public, the 1918 Olmsted comprehensive plan for Rock Creek Park was adopted, and the first attempts were made to integrate the park into a city that suddenly expanded into a metropolis during World War I. This chapter has described the park's transition from a largely remote rural tract to a significant public landscape. It highlights Rock Creek Park's role in the planning history of the national capital, describes the efforts of engineers, landscape architects, and architects to adapt the reservation for public use, and discusses construction projects and land uses in the park in this period.

#### Years of Transition

During the first decade of its existence, Rock Creek Park was a nominal public landscape. Access to the creekside interior of the park was limited to hiking or equestrian enthusiasts until the opening in 1899 of the first section of Beach Drive between Blagden Mill and Military Road. Before this time, long pleasure drives in the Rock Creek Valley were made along existing county thoroughfares, such as Broad Branch and Daniel Roads. These roads were primarily located on the periphery of the new federal reservation.<sup>1</sup> In the early years of the park's history the Rock Creek Board of Control faced the challenge of directing the land's smooth transition from private to public use.

The land area that became Rock Creek Park contained several large estates and numerous small farms with houses, mills, barns, stables, roads, and trails. By 1895 the landowners had vacated their premises, but the Board continued to lease tracts to long-term tenant farmers. One such lessee was Hugh McMahon, who rented a farmstead from Pierce Shoemaker. McMahon had operated a dairy on a tract below Military Road just west of Sixteenth Street

since 1880. In a letter to the D. C. commissioners pleading his case for a rent reduction he described his business:

I am carrying on, and have carried on for a number of years last past, a dairy. I keep from 15 to 20 cows, 2 horses, a greater or lesser number of calves, yearlings, &c., and have my stock pastured and grazed on property situate to Brightwood Avenue; but at night the animals are kept on these premises, confined in an enclosed yard. Here the cows are milked, and from here I serve my customers. I buy hay and grain for my stock in the winter, all of which is used here, my cattle being sheltered by stables and sheds that I have built.<sup>2</sup>

In 1896 there were twenty tenants living on or using property in Rock Creek Park. Some had been lessees of previous owners such as McMahon and a few were elderly black farmhands allowed to live out their lives on the property. Several farm tracts were rented to new tenants and the park foreman and watchman were also given accommodations in the park.<sup>3</sup> The Board recognized that the protection and maintenance of the park in these early years required temporary residential caretakers.

By 1895 guidelines had been introduced for the gradual relocation of park residents. The Board permitted tenants the use of a house, its outbuildings, and a one-acre garden plot. No new ground could be plowed and each acre of land in the existing fields cultivated by the tenant added five dollars to the annual property rents. The rate of house rentals in 1896 ranged from three dollars for a frame building just off Military Road to twenty dollars per month for the stone Pierce-Kingle mansion. The buildings were not repaired by the government, so many subsequently lost their rental value. This condition was considered "prima facie evidence of tearing the structure down."<sup>4</sup> Since most of the buildings in the park were of frame or log construction, most deteriorated rapidly without periodic maintenance and were removed. A few of these deteriorated buildings were given to individuals who dismantled and rebuilt the houses off the park's grounds. In 1912 the Board of Control ordered the termination of the remaining tenancy agreements. However, a few exceptions were made. The Summer Outings Committee that operated Camp Goodwill for needy children, the Water Department that grazed horses east of Daniel Road just above Military Road, and an elderly black man who lived in a cabin off Ridge (renamed Glover) Road were allowed to continue their uses of the land.<sup>5</sup>

To guide the transition from private property to public landscape, the Board of Control framed regulations for the care and management of Rock Creek Park in 1895. These rules stressed public safety and conservation of the natural beauty of the park. They also governed public conduct on the reservation and levied fines from five to fifty dollars on violators. Safety measures included a ten miles per hour speed limit for the drivers or riders of carriages, bicycles, and horses and prohibited firearms or fireworks in the park. Flora and fauna were protected by rules prohibiting hunting, fishing, overnight camping, and the cutting or defacement of vegetation. Although permits were issued for scheduled picnic gatherings, the park was banned as a venue for public meetings. Additional provisions prohibited livestock grazing and curbed bathing in Rock Creek's traditional swimming holes. However, permits for grazing livestock and swimming were regularly issued by the Board during its management tenure between 1895 and 1918.<sup>6</sup>

Although regulations for its operation were framed almost immediately after the Board assumed managerial responsibility, the reservation experienced little public use before 1900. In that year the Evening Star reported on road improvements in Rock Creek Park and remarked that "few people in Washington are yet acquainted with this royal principality of the picturesque." The article publicized the construction of new roadways (Beach and Glover Drives), and noted they opened "a beautiful sealed book" to the public.<sup>7</sup> Limited access to the park surfaced as an issue in the public meetings of the Brightwood Avenue Citizens Association in 1895. Founded in 1891 the association, like similar citizen groups throughout the city, represented its members' interests by lobbying the D. C. Commissioners and Congress for urban amenities, such as parks, streetcar lines, paved roads, and sewer, electric, and telephone services, in their neighborhood. In the late nineteenth century, Brightwood was a general designation for a community that stretched along the Seventh Street Turnpike (Georgia Avenue) between Kennedy Street, N.W. and the District boundary. The center of Brightwood was near the crossroads junction of Military, Piney Branch, Shepherd and Rock Creek Ford Roads approximately one-half mile east of Rock Creek Park.<sup>8</sup> Several prominent Brightwood residents, most notably Louis P. Shoemaker, descendant of Isaac Pierce, and prominent banker and Board of Trade member William V. Cox, were staunch supporters of the opening of Rock Creek Park and later became the reservation's first historians.<sup>9</sup> Shoemaker had

sentimental ties to the land and buildings that once had been his family's estate. Cox may have had broader civic interests. In 1896 he became president of the Brightwood Citizens Association and mounted a campaign to induce Congress to improve Rock Creek Park. Resolutions were passed and circulated by the Brightwood citizens requesting road and entrance improvements in the park, rectification of its boundary along Sixteenth Street, and the acquisition of land along Piney Branch for the placement of a parkway entrance into the reservation.<sup>10</sup> Anticipating Congressional opposition to the proposal, Brightwood resident Edward T. Bates cited the "enormous sums" for park development expended in other major cities, such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston in remarks made at a public meeting of the citizen's group:

Why, then, should Washington, the capital of God's most favored country, be unprovided for in this respect? Nature has been most lavish in furnishing the materials, and this magnificent aggregation of natural attractions has been purchased and given a name; but yet today only by name is it known by ninety-nine one-hundredths of the citizens of the District, simply because the doors are closed, and it will necessitate the expenditure of a few thousand dollars to open them.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the 1890s Cox was an active member of the Washington Board of Trade's committee on parks and reservations. Therefore, it was no surprise that his colleague *Evening Star* editor and park proponent Crosby Noyes supported the Brightwood citizens initiative and publicized its plea. However, the first Congressional appropriation for the park's maintenance was not forthcoming until 1899, a year of heightened interest in the improvement of Washington occasioned by the discussion of plans for the city's centennial celebration.

### Park Planning and the Centennial of Nation Capital

From the outset of the campaign to establish Rock Creek Park in the 1880s, Noyes forcefully expressed his view that the future civic stature of the national capital depended on Washington's development as a "city of parks." Noyes became president of the Board of Trade in 1898 and launched a concerted campaign to effect improvements to existing parks and connect them into a city wide park system. In a farewell to the Board on November 13, 1899, Noyes challenged his colleagues to press Congress for the creation of a

united system of parks in Washington to be connected by a "ring street." The newspaper editor eloquently conveyed the essence of the plan and its significance to the heritage of the national capital in the following manner:

There would not be in Vienna or Budapest, or anywhere in the world, a grander ring street or boulevard than that which should take its start on the westward grassy slopes of the Capitol grounds, sweep the Mall and Potomac Park and up Rock Creek to the Zoo and Rock Creek National Park; thence by boulevard to the Soldier's Home, and finally by boulevards and Anacostia Park back to the eastern sward and shade trees and impressive Dome of the Capitol. Its only rival would be the boulevard drive which would sweep from the Capitol through the Mall and Potomac Park, across a magnificent memorial bridge to Arlington, and by a national boulevard along the Potomac to Mount Vernon and the tomb of Washington.... The park system which thus permeates the original city is to pervade in like fashion the new Washington, and the ancient park of the forefather's plans lying between the Capitol and the White House and touching the Potomac is to merge into a great river park system, which will include as already suggested, both banks of the Potomac, the valley of Rock Creek, and the flats and heights of the Anacostia. Let us of the Washington to-day, in building up the nation's city of the second century of its life, emulate the breadth and boldness in design and the vigor in execution which were displayed at the end of the last century and in 1800 by the founders of the capital.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of Noyes's speech, the Board of Trade promoted Congressional legislation to establish a park system in Washington as part of the city's centennial in 1900 as the seat of federal government. Earlier proposals to mark the centennial, such as the construction of a memorial hall or Potomac River bridge, had been urged by a local citizen's committee which comprised several Board of Trade leaders. Congressional and national committees had also been formed to honor the occasion and each backed various commemorative plans. However, by the later months of 1899 Congress had not authorized any project. Local promoters feared the anniversary might pass without execution of any permanent improvement for the city. Consequently, in a final attempt to salvage a memorial project, a meeting of the national, congressional, and local committees was arranged and held on February 21, 1900. At that meeting Senator James McMillan (R-MI), then Chairman of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia and a powerful figure in city affairs, focused the attention of the various committees on a new memorial scheme. McMillan deftly won unanimous endorsement for an anniversary plan

that called for the enlargement of the Executive Mansion and the construction of a grand tree-lined boulevard leading from the Capitol to the Potomac River. A White House renovation was overdue in the view of many, but the possibility of constructing a new boulevard to be called "Centennial Avenue" at an oblique angle on the Mall proved to be a highly controversial suggestion.<sup>13</sup>

McMillan's scheme sparked what urban historian Jon Peterson has called the "battle of plans," a reference to the political fracas that resulted from the multitude of design proposals competing to guide the development of Washington's central core in 1900. The senator had attempted to combine the construction of a Centennial memorial with a complicated deal he had negotiated several years previously with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. In exchange for the removal of tracks at dangerous grade crossings in the capital, McMillan readied legislation for a government land grant to the Pennsylvania Railroad between Sixth and Seventh Streets on the Mall. The company would obtain an expanded lot for the station of its subsidiary, the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, at the heart of Centennial Avenue. The plan alarmed local businessmen with property interests on Pennsylvania Avenue because it threatened to relegate the existing main street to a secondary thoroughfare. It also clearly impinged on the Board of Trade's contemplated park chain, which envisioned an open Mall as the starting point for the park system. However, the Board did not publicly criticize the plan and cooperated with McMillan's objectives because the senator had been the principal supporter of their park proposals. McMillan had conducted hearings on the Board of Trade's park proposals in 1899 and authorized preliminary surveys of the land between Georgetown and the National Zoological Park. He had also prepared legislation to appoint a commission to plan the system.<sup>14</sup>

McMillan's most vocal antagonist was Colonel Theodore Bingham, who as superintendent of public buildings and grounds had charge of most of the city's parks and maintenance of the Executive Mansion. Bingham had his own plans for a White House extension to mark the city's Centennial, and the proposed avenue cut right across the Mall. As the caretaker of this park, the Colonel publicly denounced McMillan's Centennial Avenue as a desecration of the historic 1791 L'Enfant plan. He also immediately prepared a counterproposal for the open landscaped development of the Mall removing the railroad station to the south of the park.<sup>15</sup>

The Army engineers were a formidable political force in all decision-making concerning public works projects in Washington because of their conspicuous record of excellence in the execution of construction programs in the city after the Civil War. Congress respected their opinion and traditionally entrusted the U. S. Army engineers of the Chief of Engineers Office within the War Department with the responsibility of superintending all major public works or building projects in the capital. In June 1900, an amendment to a civil appropriations bill authorized the Chief of Engineers to assign Colonel Bingham the task of redesigning the Executive Mansion and employing a landscape architect of "conspicuous ability" to plan the Mall and to design a parkway link to the National Zoological Park. McMillan had proposed the amendment to the appropriations bill, but wished to assign this task to civilian design professionals who would be associated with the Chief Engineer's Office. However, the House approved the amendment authorizing the engineers to direct the project. This version of the amendment eventually prevailed in the House and Senate conference over the bill. It seemed that Bingham had won the "battle of plans" at this juncture, but as it turned out the city's planning future was far from decided.<sup>16</sup>

At this critical point an outside agent, the American Institute of Architects, intervened in the planning debate and within a year had shifted responsibility for the planning of Washington from the Army engineers to an expert commission of civilian design professionals. The mastermind behind the Institute's political strategy was Washington architect Glenn Brown. A dedicated proponent of the professional architect's status as the appropriate designer of government buildings and civic spaces, Brown seized the opportunity presented by the centennial planning debate as a means of promoting the expertise of his profession. He had been instrumental to the founding of the AIA's Washington Chapter in 1887 and subsequently directed that organization's activities for nearly three decades. In the 1890s Brown aggressively advocated that architects in private practice be employed by the federal government to design major public buildings. He also organized a national lobby to establish a board of fine arts experts to advise the government in its patronage of architecture, landscape architecture, and art. These initiatives established Brown as a noteworthy advocate of the architectural profession and led to his election as national AIA secretary in 1898.<sup>17</sup>

Once installed as an AIA executive officer, Brown launched the organization into an aggressive series of campaigns to promote its political influence and to discipline American architectural design by controlling the appearance of major public buildings and parks in the nation's capital. Brown organized the Institute's 1900 convention on the theme of the future development of Washington's central core. The objectives of the convention were twofold: to discredit the Bingham schemes for the Executive Mansion expansion and landscape plan for the Mall and to win congressional support for the appointment of an architect-dominated commission to study and suggest a plan for Washington. Sharp professional criticism of Bingham's White House extension plans, which had been published in the Ladies Home Journal in October and displayed as a plaster model at a Centennial reception held at the White House on December 12, helped defeat the scheme. Likewise, Bingham's plan for the Mall, developed by New York landscape architect Samuel Parsons, was overshadowed by competing alternatives presented at the architect's convention and eventually were abandoned. Brown arranged for extensive press coverage of the AIA convention and obtained nationally respected experts, such as landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., sculptor H. K. Bush-Brown, and architect C. Howard Walker, to deliver public lectures on the appropriate treatment of a federal building group on the Mall. The meeting proved to be a resounding public relations success which stymied Bingham and successfully reopened the debate over Washington's future.<sup>18</sup>

After the AIA convention a delegation of architects led by Institute president and Boston architect Robert S. Peabody, Glenn Brown, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., met with Senators McMillan and Jacob H. Gallinger (R- NH). The Evening Star informed the public that the conference was held to devise a "practical way for proceeding with the work of securing a plan which will bring all the parks of the District under a single management and will cause them to be beautiful harmoniously."<sup>19</sup> It was also noted in the newspaper report that the park planners would study and recommend future locations for public buildings and statuary. The delegation nominated Olmsted and Daniel Burnham of Chicago, the famous chief architect and director of the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, to the planning commission. Subsequently, McMillan selected these men and prepared a resolution to appoint two architects and one landscape architect "to consider the subject of the location and grouping of public buildings and monuments....and the

development and improvement of the park system" in the nation's capital. However, the legislation faced sharp opposition in the House and was defeated.

On March 8, 1901, during an executive session of the Senate after the adjournment of Congress, McMillan marshalled a resolution through the Senate which authorized the District Committee to employ experts "to report to the Senate plans for the development of the entire park system of the District of Columbia."<sup>20</sup> On March 22 the Evening Star reported that McMillan had held a meeting with Burnham and Olmsted, the first members appointed to what became popularly known as the Senate Park Commission. The article noted that the three men concluded their business with a carriage ride out to Rock Creek Park underscoring McMillan's stated interests in the development of a citywide park system.<sup>21</sup> A few weeks after the initial appointments, Burnham and Olmsted chose New York architect Charles F. McKim to join them in their work and a few months later sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens was also appointed to the panel of experts.

### The 1901-1902 McMillan Plan and Rock Creek Park

On January 16, 1902, the McMillan commission opened a stunning exhibit of its comprehensive plan for Washington, which was displayed at the Corcoran Gallery for six weeks. Huge color renderings, plaster models, and plans illustrated Washington's future appearance. Poster size photographs of European urban centers afforded viewers the opportunity to compare old world cities to the future grandeur of Washington. The timing for the presentation of this bold plan was indeed propitious. The national economy had fully recovered from a depression triggered by the Panic of 1893. America became a major colonial power in 1898 with the acquisition of Cuba and the Phillipines and was seeking symbols to mark its emergence as a great nation state. Labor unrest and squalid urban conditions underscored the perception of many reformers that an urgent need existed for the creation of social discipline and visual order in American cities. For these and many other reasons, the classical architecture and orderly arrangement of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition came to symbolize an ideal prototype for turn-of-the-century 'City Beautiful.'<sup>22</sup>

The now famous 1901-1902 McMillan plan had no legal sanction and was resented by House members, particularly powerful Representative Joseph Cannon (R-IL) who was elected House Speaker in 1903. To "Uncle Joe," Senator McMillan had flagrantly circumvented the traditional legislative bargaining process. The result was more than a decade of acrimonious debate over the design, location, or treatment of Washington's public buildings, parks, and monuments. Legal recognition of the McMillan plan actually started with the formation of the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts in 1910 because Daniel Burnham, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Charles Moore were accepted as its charter members. However, it took over a decade for Congress to recognize the commission's work and to enact legislation that codified the 1901-1902 plan's proposals. These statutes established the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1926 and the Capper-Cramton park program in 1930.<sup>23</sup>

The two major elements of the McMillan plan were the commission's now-famous kite-shaped design for a concentrated civic core of public buildings and monuments and their proposals for a regional park system. Execution of these planning components were basically limited to the plans for Washington's monumental core, where virtually all of the commission's suggestions were followed. However, significant pieces of the proposed park system, largely planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., were also built. There were many reasons for this imbalance in the McMillan plan's execution. Foremost was the perception of the vital symbolic importance of the Mall plan. In this space was to be exhibited the landscape, buildings, statuary, and monuments created by the nation's most talented professional landscape architects, architects, and artists. The Mall also came to represent the plan's patriotic component because it revived the central vista of the 1791 city plan of Pierre Charles L'Enfant. It was proudly claimed by the planners and their advocates that the McMillan plan reinstated a historic legacy of planning and architectural order intended by Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Implementation of the central core design was considered essential to the McMillan plan. Moreover, the hard fought campaigns to defend the Mall plan, most notably for siting the Agriculture Building (1904), the Grant Memorial (1907), and the Lincoln Memorial (1913) in a manner that adhered to the commission's design, largely absorbed the energies of the plan's advocates in the first decade of its implementation.<sup>24</sup>

The park system proposals presented in the McMillan commission's report in 1902 were not neglected. Olmsted's plans to provide neighborhood parks, particularly outside the limits of the L'Enfant city, the creation of parks at the sites of Civil War forts, and a parkway connection between the Potomac and Zoological Parks were popular ideas with strong support from citizens groups, veterans organizations, and the Board of Trade. The plans for Washington's park system also included the construction of a huge quay along the Potomac River at Georgetown, reclamation of the Anacostia flats as a recreational water park, a parkway system connecting the historic Civil War defense fortifications, and construction of a "national" highway to Mount Vernon. Major park acquisitions, such as the Piney Branch (1907) and Rock Creek and Potomac (1913) Parkways, were early manifestations of attempts to integrate Olmsted's planning suggestions into the city's future development.<sup>25</sup>

A significant indication of the growing importance of park development in the outlying areas of the city was the publication of the McMillan commission's 1902 report in an abridged form in 1913. The stated objective of this booklet was "to give a conception of the plans of the Park Commission for the development of Washington, especially that part relating to the outlying park system." In this document, plans for the Mall core were condensed into a few paragraphs and the commission's park suggestions received emphasis. The publication of this reprint may have been caused by the perceived urgency on the part of Charles Moore to counteract the advance of suburban growth. The pamphlet warned that whatever natural beauty preserved or park space acquired had to be provided for "during the next few years or it will be forever too late."<sup>26</sup> Many specific components of the commission's park system were not executed, such as the fort drive parkway. Yet the park system proposals influenced succeeding generations of planners who used the report as a resource for regional park development. For example, the George Washington Parkway was an extension of the Mount Vernon road concept presented in the 1902 planning report.

Olmsted was 31 years of age when he was appointed to the McMillan commission and his relative youth was important. The landscape architect enjoyed a long and illustrious career as one of the foremost members of his profession. Consequently, his advice and services were sought after in Washington. As an active member of the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts,

National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and employed adviser to government agencies for more than three decades, Olmsted would have a profound influence on the evolution of the capital's modern park system.<sup>27</sup>

In the 1902 report the McMillan commission made it clear that Rock Creek Park's development as the "principal park of a populous city was a matter of great perplexity, requiring the most careful study." The landscape architect emphasized the need for a master plan for the park's development. He praised the overall roadbuilding skill of the Army engineers in the park, but noted that the grading of several sections of Beach Drive had seriously damaged the scenery. The report suggested building new roads on the heights above the creek and cautioned that "it is true that the value of the park scenery depends absolutely upon making it conveniently accessible to the people, but nothing can be gained if the means of access destroys the scenery which it is meant to exhibit...."<sup>28</sup> Olmsted's suggestion of a comprehensive plan for Rock Creek Park was not acted on for more than fifteen years.

### Park Planning and Administration, 1916-1933

In 1917 the Board of Control commissioned the Olmsted Brothers to prepare a planning study for the future development of Rock Creek Park. The resulting report, completed by the landscape architecture firm in December, 1918, quickly became a seminal planning document for the improvement and expansion of Rock Creek Park. The importance of a planning study of the reservation had been recognized since the publication of the 1902 McMillan comission report. However, the general thinking in Congress was that a natural preserve did not need funds for development. From 1899 to 1912 a total of only \$223,333.98 was disbursed from the Treasury for maintenance and improvement of Rock Creek Park.<sup>29</sup> These small appropriations limited the Board of Control's operations prior to 1916. In that year plans were proposed for the construction of a "Municipal Play Grounds and Recreation Park" at Sixteenth Street near the Brightwood Reservoir in Rock Creek Park. The proposal, submitted by the Surveyor of the District of Columbia Melvin C. Hazen, called for construction of baseball fields, tennis courts, a bandstand, a stable, "ten rustic summer houses for picnics," and a racetrack. The ensuing official review of this project idea had surprising results.<sup>30</sup>

General William M. Black, Chief of Engineers and a member of the Board of Control, requested that Colonel William W. Harts prepare an assessment of the recreation area proposal. Harts was responsible for most of Washington's park system, but not Rock Creek Park, as Officer in Charge of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. His response to General Black went far beyond an opinion concerning the plans:

The constant demand for improvements of various kinds throughout the park emphasizes more than ever the urgent need of having a carefully considered plan for the entire park prepared by a competent landscape architect who will keep in mind the necessity of having the primitive beauty of this great sylvan park left untouched by artificialities, and who will view the problem not as a convenient recreation area for the favored few possessing private means of conveyance but as a great country park set in the midst of a densely populated city. If such a plan is not soon prepared, abuses already begun will be carried to such a point that retention of the natural characteristics of the park will be more and more difficult.<sup>31</sup>

On December 3, 1918, the Evening Star reported that the Board of Control concluded its review of the proposal for a recreation area near the Brightwood Reservoir. The article informed the public that the park board had approved the construction of tennis courts, croquet grounds, and picnic groves in the vicinity of the reservoir. Colonel Harts's critical memorandum was also extensively quoted. Apparently it had been released to the press by General Black.<sup>32</sup>

On December 27, 1916, Colonel Charles W. Kutz, the Engineer Commissioner and Secretary of the Board of Control, wrote Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to request his services in the preparation of a plan for the park. Traditionally, the engineer commissioner had acted as the executive officer of the Board of Control. However, during the early months of 1917 a misunderstanding ensued over which army engineer would direct the preparation of a comprehensive planning study for Rock Creek Park. Colonel Harts had been given verbal instructions by General Black to prepare a preliminary plan for the reservation. On March 13, 1917, Colonel Kutz again wrote to Olmsted to explain the reason for the delay in finalizing a contract. He described his inability to secure concerted action between the Chief of Engineers and the D. C. Commissioners, the remaining members of the Board. In the following letter, Kutz noted that a strained compromise had been reached:

Colonel Harts, the Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, as the natural adviser of the Chief of Engineers on all park matters has been asked by the latter to formulate his ideas relative to the development of Rock Creek Park, while the Commissioners have delegated me as one of their number to assemble any ideas which the District Commissioners or their subordinates may have relative to the same subject. Some time during the first half of April it is proposed to have a conference with the Chief of Engineers at which all of these ideas will be presented and discussed, and it is then that you will be invited to come in and exercise your professional judgment as to the ideas advanced and supplement them by others. I want to say to you frankly that this is not my idea as to the way the work should be done. I was in favor of turning the problem over to you to be worked out in its entirety. General Black was more or less in favor of turning the matter over to Harts and having him develop the general plan in his office during the ensuing year, under the eye and with the advice of the Fine Arts Commission.<sup>33</sup>

In response Olmsted reassured Kutz that if "all of us who take a hand in the consultations exercise sufficient patience and refuse to be discouraged by the difficulties which beset any project where so many cooks are at work on the broth, I am sure that we can ultimately pull the thing through..."<sup>34</sup> In April, 1917, General Black submitted a memorandum to the Board of Control concerning the future development of Rock Creek Park. The five page document was sharply critical of the past work of the Board. A program of operations was outlined for future maintenance and construction of roads, paths, walks, bridges, service buildings, and transportation facilities. Colonel Kutz made a conciliatory reply admitting the Board had made "minor mistakes," but reminded Black that the body had also maintained and improved the park with very limited funding. General Black was informed that his memorandum would be given to the Olmsted Brothers, and it appears that the Board was subsequently able to convince the Chief of Engineers that employment of the landscape firm was the best course of action.<sup>35</sup>

On May 18, 1917, the Olmsted Brothers entered into an agreement with the Board of Control to prepare a report on the improvement of Rock Creek Park. By August the firm had prepared a progress report on its work to that date. This initial submission was significant because it revealed the landscape architects' philosophical approach to the study:

Little need be said at this time about the very exceptional natural beauty of Rock Creek Park, of the charm and restfulness of its very

wildness; but just because of these qualities it is a very, very precious possession and a little emphasis may not be out of place. The essential justification for this large park is unquestionably found in the recreation value of its wild or "undeveloped" qualities - large stretches of natural forest, river valleys, dark ravines, rolling hills, and occasional meadow lands - and no use or exploitation or development of any sort can ever be right that is not based upon that fundamental conception. To recognize that fact may not make it easier to properly plan the development of the park and to properly control its use, but it will make it easier to appreciate what should not be done; and in the nature of the case that is more important.<sup>36</sup>

The Olmsted firm's final report was submitted in December, 1918. Its first sentence boldly declared the credo that "The dominant consideration, never to be subordinated to any other purpose in dealing with Rock Creek Park, is the permanent preservation of its wonderful natural beauty, and the making of that beauty accessible to people without spoiling the scenery in the process."<sup>37</sup> The character of the topography and natural growth areas were defined in the study and suggestions proposed for the systematic preservation and enhancement of the landscape. Rock Creek Park was divided into four fundamental units defined as natural forest (Type I), open woodland (Type II), an area of growth primarily of cedars (Type III), and open grass land (Type IV) [See map appendix].

These defined landscape units were illustrated on a map of the park accompanying the report. Type I indicated natural forest conditions of mixed deciduous trees as they existed in 1918. This category of landscape dominated the land area of the park. Type II were units of open woodland where groves of trees would be planted for shade and for provision of a transition from open field to dense forest. Few areas of this type existed in the park at this time. Type III was a landscape category to identify areas of cedar, sassafras, locusts, and occasional pine trees, which contributed an "interesting and valued variation in the general landscape of the park." The Olmsteds noted a stretch of trees of this type existed on the slopes near Fort DeRussy. Type IV was an open landscape with a few shade trees, and it was to be primarily open mowed lawns and meadow.<sup>38</sup>

The Olmsted Plan also defined administrative units in the park. The primary area was the Rock Creek Valley, which was considered as "topographically and psychologically the backbone" of the park. The creek was considered a "drawing card" where picnic groves, swimming holes, and wading

pools were to be permitted, but this use was always to appear "unmistakably incidental." The main tributaries of Rock Creek, the Piney Branch and Broad Branch, and the valley of the Military Road were to form an arterial system of parkways. Another major administration unit was the plateau of land adjoining the Brightwood Reservoir. At this site space for recreation grounds for basketball, tennis, cricket, football, and band concerts were to be developed. Two forest units of 300 and 450 acres were set aside in the northern half of the park mainly for exploration, hiking, and horseback riding. Another 150-acre unit of rolling hillside and meadow above Military Road east of Rock Creek was provided for leisurely walks and picnics.<sup>39</sup>

The report also discussed the treatment of artificial structures in the park, emphasizing that "they should be so designed and located as to fall naturally into place as part and parcel of the scenery." Trails and bridle paths were to be built to exhibit the "variety and charm of the scenery" and planned to appear as though they belonged where they were placed. The report proposed only a tentative development plan for roads. Yet, it was noted that the present park roads could not be widened without damaging the landscape. It was recommended that more narrow roads be built. The Olmsteds anticipated that this would mean "a one-way traffic regulation may sometime be necessary." Three major cross valley thoroughfares were also considered. One was placed on the ridge south of Military Road, and the other two were elevated viaducts planned to move streetcar and automobile traffic across the valley at the narrow end of park at points above and below Pierce Mill.<sup>40</sup>

As might be expected the Olmsted Plan received glowing praise from James L. Greenleaf, a landscape architect and member of the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts who succeeded Olmsted in this position in 1918. In a lengthy letter to Colonel Clarence S. Ridley, Officer in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds, whose agency began the administration of Rock Creek Park in 1918, Greenleaf discussed the Olmsted report and advised that "[it be] abstracted in printed form and read daily as their bible by those immediately in responsible charge of maintenance of woodland and meadow."<sup>41</sup> After the approval of the Commission of Fine Arts, Ridley incorporated the plan into his management policies for the park and ordered that nothing would be done in Rock Creek Park that was contrary to the letter or the spirit of the Olmsted report without his written permission. The Colonel also established a park board which included his staff landscape architects, James D. Langdon and

Irving W. Payne. These experienced professionals were detailed to study the plan, to make recommendations on its implementation, and to review and report on ongoing work in the park. They were also directed to consult with James Greenleaf and obtain his advice for proposed work. Ridley also added forestry specialist Smith Riley to his staff.<sup>42</sup>

Soon after the reorganization of the administration of Rock Creek under the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, criticism of its management began to surface with Greenleaf and Fine Arts Commission chairman Charles Moore. Ridley's successor, Colonel Sherrill, took umbrage to Greenleaf's criticism of his management of the park and challenged the landscape architect's criticism on several occasions. In 1921 he explained that there was no lack of artistic feeling in the work on the park, but that appropriations were not sufficient to accomplish all that was necessary to do. In 1925 the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds was abolished and its function as managers of Washington's park system was assigned to a new agency, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. For the next eight years the army engineers continued to administer Rock Creek Park, but faced increasing scrutiny from a growing group of professional architects, landscape architects, and planners as Washington emerged into a metropolitan center. On August 10, 1933, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital was abolished and its responsibility for Rock Creek Park was transferred to the National Park Service.<sup>43</sup>

In the early 1920s the impact of urbanization on the environmental quality of Rock Creek Park reached crisis proportions, and it was feared that, if left unchecked, development in the watershed of Rock Creek Valley would render the creek into a mere trickle. As northwest Washington and Montgomery County, Maryland, were settled and sewer lines were built, the tributaries and springs which fed Rock Creek were diverted or capped. Deforestation had also contributed to a substantial reduction of the stream's flow. This problem had been predicted by Major John Biddle, secretary of the Board of Control, in a report prepared under his direction in 1907. However, no action was taken to protect the watershed until the situation became dire in the 1920s.<sup>44</sup>

The acquisition of park land to preserve the streamflow and to prevent the pollution of Rock Creek was a major objective of progressives who wished to see a planned national capital become an inspirational symbol for the nation's

cities. National and local organizations, most notably the American Planning and Civic Association and the Washington Board of Trade, lobbied aggressively for legislation to create a park commission with regional planning powers. On June 6, 1924, legislation creating the National Capital Park Commission was enacted. The statute authorized the commission to acquire park lands in the District, Virginia, and Maryland with the intention of preserving the flow of water in and preventing the pollution of Rock Creek. It was also a conservation measure aimed at preserving the forests and natural scenery in the Washington region and instructed the commission "to provide for the comprehensive, systematic, and continuous development of park, parkway, and playground system."<sup>45</sup>

In 1926 subsequent legislation gave the new commission expanded planning powers and renamed the agency, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The 1926 act "outlined a host of new duties in 'preparing, developing, and maintaining a comprehensive, consistent and coordinated plan for the National Capital and its environs, embracing transportation, subdivisions, public building sites, sewerage, zoning, commerce and industry, and 'other proper elements of city and regional planning. "<sup>46</sup> This regional planning movement was continued in 1927 with the creation of the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission set up to administer the acquisition and development of parkland in Montgomery and Prince Georges counties. This commission established by the Maryland legislature would have similar powers to its federal counterpart in the jurisdictions bordering the District of Columbia.

In 1930 regional planning was given an important boost by the enactment of the Capper-Cramton Act, sponsored by the Senate and House District Committee chairmen, Senator Arthur Capper (R-KS) and Representative Louis Cramton (R-MI). This law established a grant program to provide monies for the acquisitions of park acreage in the Washington metropolitan region. With the aid of this funding source, the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) began to acquire land along the Rock Creek stream valley. Some years later the state had completed a significant extension of Rock Creek Park into Maryland under the jurisdiction of the MNCPPC, ultimately comprising 4,193 acres and reaching 22 miles upstream from the District line. By the early 1930s Rock Creek Park in the District had become a component of an emerging regional park system.

Preservation of the watershed would be enhanced. However, the abatement and prevention of the pollution of Rock Creek has remained a serious problem.<sup>47</sup>

### The Development and Uses of Rock Creek Park Prior to 1933

Until the Olmsted plan for Rock Creek Park was prepared, there was no comprehensive planning document for the reservation. The Board of Control, however, did adhere to a consistent policy in all park improvements. In Section 7 of the act establishing Rock Creek Park, Congress instructed the Board of Control to provide improvements in the form of roadways, bridle paths, and trails for driving, horseback riding, and walking. They also mandated that the natural beauty of the park and its "curiosities" be preserved. These guidelines, presented in the legislation, largely determined the Board's direction of the park's physical development during its managerial tenure.<sup>48</sup>

#### Road, Trail and Bridge Construction

The appropriations received for Rock Creek Park's improvement between 1899 and 1918 were primarily spent on road and bridge construction. Most of the remaining monies were expended to support adaptive reuse of existing buildings, roads, bridges, and trails. With the exception of the Miller cabin, only temporary buildings were added to the park in this period. Several dramatic serpentine drives, such as Beach Drive and Glover, Wise and Ross Roads were built in this period. In the 1920s connecting connecting routes, Sherrill, Joyce, and Bingham Drives, were completed. The construction of this road system, which is largely extant, required considerable grading and innovative construction and represents the most conspicuous contribution of the Army Corps of Engineers to the park's designed character.

The first Army officer to act as superintendent in Rock Creek Park was Captain Gustav J. Fieburger. His tenure from 1894 to 1896 was brief, and it appeared from his correspondence that his time was absorbed with routine management responsibilities. Many of the letters in the engineer's files were requests for bathing and picnic permits, tenant pleas for rent reductions, or requests for temporary housing. There are also large packets of weekly

inspection reports from park watchmen.<sup>49</sup> One of the most unusual permit requests in the 1890s was from Baptist minister C. N. Champ. The Tenleytown pastor requested and subsequently obtained a permit to baptize his flock in the waters of Rock Creek just below Pierce Mill. The correspondence suggests that he baptized candidates for his church in the creek regularly on Sundays between 1897 and 1900.<sup>50</sup>

Fieburger's successor was Captain Lansing H. Beach, whose imprint on Rock Creek Park was profound. It was largely because of Beach's initiative that the program of road improvement and construction in the park was launched. In 1897 the Army engineer assumed responsibility for the park and almost immediately began maintenance work on existing roads. He also directed construction of a park drive along Rock Creek incorporating existing road segments and a dirt road created by the construction of a sewer line alongside the creek just below Piney Branch in 1896. In recognition of his contributions to the early development of Rock Creek Park, this drive was named in his honor in 1901.<sup>51</sup>

Undeterred by the failure of Congress to provide appropriations for the park's improvement, Beach arranged for the use of convict labor to work on the roads and to remove unwanted undergrowth. Apparently, the engineers utilized this source of cheap labor for several years after congressional appropriations began to be provided on an annual basis. In 1903 the Evening Star described the laborers at work on Ross Drive:

Every morning about 8 o' clock travelers down 14th street will meet from two to three wagons filled with motley crews, all dressed with a similarity that is particularly striking. Their garments are late effects in stripes. Broad and black, these stripes have a horizontal direction and alternate with strata of white.... Few visitors to the park realize how much these convicts have done here. They do not know that these same malefactors now doing penance in the way of municipal labor are engaged just now in clearing and cutting and grading what will be one of the most popular drives in the reservation.<sup>52</sup>

Although he was promoted to Major and appointed to the post of District Engineer Comissioner in 1898, Beach continued to direct the development of Rock Creek Park until the completion of his service in November, 1902. His civilian assistant, William P. Richards, noted that four miles of macadam and three miles of dirt road had been built under Beach's direction. In addition,

older existing roads, such as Pierce Mill (1831), Grant (formerly an abandoned segment of old Military Road, 1862), Military Road (1862), and Daniel Road (1872, now Oregon Avenue) were widened, regraded, and surfaced with gravel. Beach's roadbuilding program was a significant achievement, given that it cost only \$55,000 and comprised more than two-thirds of a total of more than eleven miles of new and repaired roads constructed or repaired in the park before 1918.<sup>53</sup>

The new roads built in Rock Creek Park before World War I included Beach Drive (1897-1900), Wise Road (1900), Ridge Road (1899-1901, now Glover Drive), Ross Drive (1902-1903), and Morrow Road (1911). The average width of roadbed averaged between sixteen and twenty-four feet. However, the heavily used lower section of Beach Drive between Klinge Ford and Pierce Mill was thirty feet wide. The macadamized surface width averaged eighteen feet. Most of the roads required heavy grading and substantial fills to reduce steep inclines to a maximum seven percent grade throughout the system. The rock blasted away in the cuts was crushed and used to macadamize the roads. To minimize environmental impact innovative engineering solutions were employed. For example, when the Blagden Mill ruins were removed in 1899 to make way for the construction of Beach Drive, the roadbed was constructed on the line of the old mill race.<sup>54</sup>

From the start of the road building program, the engineers were sensitive to potential criticism concerning the effect of the construction on the natural beauty of the park. In reviewing the progress of road building before 1905, Richards noted that great care had been taken "to do as little damage to the topography as possible outside the limits of the road, and considerable dirt was hauled from points at the two ends of the roads in order to prevent defacement of the banks on either side."<sup>55</sup> He also responded to criticism reflected in the McMillan commission's 1902 planning report:

No comprehensive plan, of course, has been undertaken for the improvement of the park. The present lines of the roads follow the most natural topographical conditions and are so located and graded that they will naturally weave in with any plan that may be finally devised for the more complete improvement of the park.<sup>56</sup>

The road network was a popular addition to the park because it opened the valley to scenic carriage and automobile rides in most seasons,

particularly south of Military Road. Road conditions on the unpaved roads in the northern section required the thoroughfares be closed during inclement winter months. Opening the park to vehicular traffic provided increased public access to the walking trails and bridle paths. To a nation influenced at the turn-of-the-century by President Theodore Roosevelt's philosophy of the strenuous life, hiking and horseback riding were naturally popular recreational pursuits in the park.<sup>57</sup>

President Roosevelt was a frequent visitor to the park and hiked its rugged hills and ravines, often exhorting his cabinet members and foreign ministers to join him on rambles through the area. French ambassador, Jules J. Jusserand often accompanied Roosevelt on his hiking expeditions. The ambassador enjoyed the city's parks and was keenly interested in Washington's development, particularly the McMillan commission's planned restoration of the L'Enfant plan for the Mall. In 1936 a memorial in Rock Creek Park was dedicated in Jusserand's honor to commemorate his scholarly and diplomatic contributions to Franco-American relations as ambassador to the United States between 1903 and 1925. President Woodrow Wilson also enjoyed walks and drives in the park. With the popularity of riding and walking in the park and the prominent statesmen pursuing these leisure activities, it was not surprising that the Board of Control had authorized construction or improvement of approximately 22 miles of bridle paths and six miles of footpaths by 1918. Many of the trails were adapted from abandoned nineteenth-century paths and roads, which required little more than the addition of jumps to create challenging riding circuits.<sup>58</sup>

By 1914 Rock Creek Park was no longer considered a remote outlying park reservation. Streetcar service had expanded to within reasonable walking distance of the boundaries of the park along Fourteenth and Sixteenth Streets and Connecticut Avenue and plans to extend the lines into the park were being considered.<sup>59</sup> Park superintendent Lee R. Grabill noted in his report of that year:

The general use of the park by the public is largely increasing year by year, and especially by picnicking parties and pedestrians, for whose benefit many paths and footbridges have been built. The south and central parts of the park are easily accessible from streetcar lines at several points, and as this fact becomes known to pedestrians they are becoming more numerous in proportion to the whole number of persons who frequent the park.<sup>60</sup>

The success of the road and trail building program in opening Rock Creek Park to recreational pleasure drives, walks, and horseback riding was immediate. By 1907 the park's roads and bridle paths were so crowded with vehicles and horses on Sundays and holidays that a park report noted that "walking is attended with danger and discomfort."<sup>61</sup> In 1909 tour bus companies were granted permission to enter the park, but vehicle passenger capacity was limited to eight persons. This restriction was waived for a private bus service arranged by the Board. For a ten cent one-way fare a rider could travel from Mount Pleasant through the Zoological Park and Rock Creek Park along Beach Drive to Brightwood.<sup>62</sup> On April 10, 1910, a park traffic report recorded that 1,126 motorcycles and automobiles, 1,050 two and 190 one horse vehicles, 293 equestrians, and 1,215 pedestrians had passed Pierce Mill between 10 am and 6 pm.<sup>63</sup> In 1912, when the Board of Control published its report of park improvements, the automobile dominated discussion of future needs for Rock Creek Park.

In 1918 Rock Creek Park and the Piney Branch Parkway were made a part of the park system of the District of Columbia under the jurisdiction of the Chief of Engineers and authority for the park's management was transferred to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. New roads surveyed and constructed between 1919 and 1925 by this agency included Bingham Drive, Sherrill Drive, and Joyce Road. These thoroughfares were major connections to the existing system and opened new crossing routes in the northern section of the park while providing access to the new golf course.<sup>64</sup> The first of the roads to be built was Bingham Drive, connecting Daniel Road to Beach Drive above Military Road. This winding drive was considered a model for future roadbuilding in the park. In 1931 it was proposed that the road system be entirely rebuilt to the standards of Bingham Drive, which had an asphalt surface. The existing "old waterbound macadam" surface-treated gravel roads were considered antiquated, being "designed for carriage traffic and can not much longer stand up under the increasingly heavy motor traffic."<sup>65</sup> A major program of upgrading the road system was not implemented until the National Park Service assumed responsibility for the park after 1933. Although improvements have been made in building new spans across Rock Creek, installing modern roadbeds, and widening the dangerous curves and

intersections, the designed intent of this circulation system remains extant and documents the roadbuilding skill of the Army engineers.

Beach's mark on Rock Creek Park also extended to early bridge design. In 1900 the engineer planned to build several permanent bridges for his Rock Creek road and obtained the design services of Washington architect Glenn Brown. Brown was paid to design three melan arch concrete bridges for Rock Creek Park. However, only one of the bridges was actually built according to the architect's design. This structure was Pebble Dash bridge, which spanned Rock Creek's Broad Branch tributary and was completed in 1902. It was named for its sandy colored brushed concrete and pebble finish and was a popular landmark in the park. For many years it was used in conjunction with a ford to cross Broad Branch at Beach Drive, but both features were replaced by modern bridge construction in the 1960s.<sup>66</sup>

It was likely that Brown also prepared preliminary designs for a small stone and concrete arch built over Piney Branch in this period and for the Boulder Bridge. The architect was noted for the excellence of his park bridge design. This reputation had been significantly advanced in 1900 by an article in the American Architect and Building News, citing Brown's bridge designs at the National Zoological Park as nationally praiseworthy. These bridges were the Boulder bridge (1894) and the Log bridge (1895), both of which were widely admired in Washington. Although Brown's designs for the Piney Branch arch (1901) and Boulder Bridge (1902) were not executed, his ideas may have influenced the eventual appearance of these structures. His work at the National Zoological Park had set an important precedent in the demonstration of how Olmstedian theories of landscape design might be applied to the Rock Creek Valley, clearly subordinating bridge architecture to the landscape.<sup>67</sup> Of this series of Rock Creek melan arch bridges built in 1901-1902 only Boulder Bridge remains extant. The structure was built to replace an old plank crossing near Blagden Mill. Its design is usually credited to the D. C. bridge engineer, William J. Douglas, who prepared the working plans.<sup>68</sup>

In 1921 a condition report, prepared by Lt. Colonel Clarence O. Sherrill, summarized the work of the Board of Control in the park. Sherrill noted that the Board had directed the construction of "three permanent stone and concrete bridges, and one temporary girder bridge across Rock Creek, five masonry bridges or viaducts across smaller streams, and numerous culverts, 2 wood

bridges, a dam at Pierce Mill composed of bowlders, and a considerable area of the park near the roads cleared and the portion open maintained in a suitable condition.<sup>69</sup> The three permanent bridges mentioned were probably the Boulder (1902), Pebble Dash (1902) and Ross Drive (1907), structures. Ross Drive bridge replaced a timber trestle erected in 1903 by convict laborers across the deep ravine approximately one-half mile south of Joyce Road. The new bridge was an open spandrel reinforced concrete structure designed by William J. Douglas and completed in 1907. The engineer claimed that it was the earliest known triple-hinge bridge built in the United States. The bridge was a clear departure from the earlier rustic expression of the melon arches that had been built under Beach's direction. Douglas considered the light structural appearance of the ribbed arched and spandrel columns and the addition of concrete troughs for vine planters a sufficient concession to the picturesque surroundings. The planters have been removed and the bridge was widened in 1968, but the design integrity of its dramatic arched span and its handsome organic structural shape have been retained.<sup>70</sup> The temporary girder bridge may have been the Kalmia Bridge (1902), which had a span of sixty feet carried on two steel girders supported by gneiss stone abutments.<sup>71</sup> The bridge has been replaced by a modern structure.

The masonry bridges mentioned in the 1921 report probably included the Piney Branch and Pinehurst bridges. The latter bridge was constructed in 1910 and spans Pinehurst Branch approximately three quarters of a mile south of Sherrill Drive. Built to replace a wooden structure, the bridge has a single concrete arched span faced with irregularly coursed stone. In 1958 the bridge was widened as part of the Beach Drive reconstruction. At this time the structure was significantly widened, the original stone parapets were removed, and steel railings were added.<sup>72</sup>

Several other arches were built on Beach Drive above Military Road and on Morrow Drive between 1909 and 1911, but most of these small masonry structures have been replaced. However, the Morrow Drive bridge, built at a right angle to the brook it crosses, is extant and well represents this stone arch bridge type built in the park in this period.<sup>73</sup> Temporary wooden rustic bridges were commonly built in Rock Creek Park before 1933 as vehicular and pedestrian crossings. Periodic floods often washed these bridges away. One of the best known examples of this bridge type, constructed under the direction of the Board of Control, was the log girder "Old Rustic Footbridge" built across

Rock Creek in 1907 on line with Bladgen Avenue. The structure was removed in 1939.<sup>74</sup>

The dam mentioned in Sherrill's summary is extant. It was built under the direction of Otto Strange in 1904 as a replacement for an old wooden dam further upstream which was washed out. The banks of the creek in the vicinity of Pierce Mill were an early popular picnic area in the park, and the new boulder dam was built to restore the picturesque site. The loss of the old dam had revealed a "barren and rather ugly bed" along the segment of the creek which had once been an attractive mill pond.<sup>75</sup>

Two important bridges, the Park Road Viaduct (1900) and the Sixteenth Street bridge (1907-1910), may not have been considered in Sherrill's summary because they were built under the authority of the D. C. Bridge Division. The Park Road bridge was erected before the addition of the Piney Branch Parkway to Rock Creek Park in 1907. The simple steel truss bridge had an overall length of 300 feet and a roadway width of approximately 21 feet. The utilitarian structure was built by the Toledo Bridge Company and spanned the Piney Branch valley connecting Mount Pleasant with Beach Drive and Tilden Street.<sup>76</sup> A modern bridge has replaced the structure. The Sixteenth Street bridge, which is extant, began construction in the year the tributary valley was acquired by the government. This handsome structure was built in two stages between 1907 and 1910 and was the first parabolic arch bridge built in the United States. From the parkway the bridge has a span of 125 feet and appears as a solid arch. A smooth concrete triple arch ring and coping relieve the filled spandrels covered by pebble aggregate. The topside of the bridge on Sixteenth Street incorporates simple neoclassical balusters and dramatic tigers, sculptured by noted animalier Alexander P. Proctor, which flank each end of the bridge. This architectural sculpture lends the bridge its popular name, "Tiger Bridge."<sup>77</sup>

During the 1920s the Army Corps of Engineers directed the repair or construction of five notable park bridges across Rock Creek and its tributaries. These were the Pierce Mill (1921), Sherrill (1924), Milk House Ford (1926), old Military Road (1929), and the Wooden Cantilever (1929) Bridges. Pierce Mill bridge was originally a wooden structure built in 1872 and was supported on granite piers and abutments. In 1895 the D. C. Commissioners authorized installation of new steel girders, a wooden deck, and railings. The Board of Control directed additional improvements framing the east and west

approaches to the bridge with masonry walls in 1913. In 1921 the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds renovated the structure. A new abutment was constructed on the east bank of Rock Creek and the deck was surfaced with asphalt. In addition, a graded and filled roadway connection was built between the east wing walls facing Park Road and tubular railings were installed. This upgrading improved safety at the junction, but it was considered a temporary expedient. The 1918 Olmsted park plan made it clear a new bridge was needed and suggested construction of a bridge 500 feet downstream to alleviate the heavy cross valley traffic. However, the structure, although reinforced and repaired many times, remains in service today and is the oldest bridge in the park.<sup>78</sup>

The Sherrill Drive bridge built in 1924 also reflected a utilitarian approach to bridge construction. This structure was a light Warren-type steel semi-through truss bridge obtained as surplus material from the War Department after World War I. The steel superstructure was erected on native stone abutments and was considered to be conspicuously out of harmony with its setting.<sup>79</sup> Today a less obtrusive modern bridge spans the creek at this point on Sherrill Drive.

The remaining bridges built in the 1920s, with the exception of old Military Road bridge, were designed in a rustic manner. The Milkhouse Ford bridge (1926) was a Howe truss with a single span of 48 feet and width of 18 feet. The height of the bridge was fifteen feet above the creek. The construction material was heavy, hand-hewn timbers. The structure was located just above the Milk House Ford and has since been replaced by a modern span. The Wooden Cantilever bridge (1929) was 74 feet long and was constructed with small log timbers supported by cut stone piers and concrete beams. The pedestrian bridge, which is no longer extant, was three-and-one-half feet wide and long. It was elevated ten feet above the creek and was built near Pulpit Rock.<sup>80</sup>

The old Military Road bridge was built in 1929 and was a significant departure from the rustic designs employed for the majority of bridges erected in the park before 1933. The structure remains extant and spans Rock Creek on a section of road that is now part of Joyce Road. Military Road was reconstructed in the 1960s and its new alignment bypassed this old segment of the thoroughfare. The bridge is a steel beam, flat arch structure with concrete deck and abutments. Designed under the direction of the D. C. Bridge

Division, the bridge has an overall length of 90 feet and a width of 38 feet. The surface of the concrete structure has been carefully molded to imitate classical ornament and detailing. Rusticated abutments, enriched moldings, and a balustraded parapet create a neoclassical bridge design more attuned to an urban street of this period than a park.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to the major bridges, there were at least seven fords on Rock Creek for vehicles and horseback riders. In 1907 these fords were located at Kingle Ford Road, just south of Pierce Mill Road, adjacent to the Pebble Dash bridge on line with Blagden Avenue, at a site approximately a quarter of a mile north of Boulder Bridge, and the Milk House Ford above Military Road. The remaining fords were located along equestrian trails north of Sherrill Drive. In 1933 only the Pebble Dash bridge and Milk House fords were in operation. Today Milk House Ford is the only extant crossing of this type.<sup>82</sup>

### Major Buildings and Park Facilities

As might be expected by the pattern of road construction in Rock Creek Park before 1933, the major facilities and most intensive use of the park occurred in the land area below Military Road. The solid stone buildings erected by the Pierce family were among the first structures adapted for park use. Pierce Mill ceased operations as an industrial building in 1897 and was converted into a tea house by 1905. The Pierce-Kingle mansion, after being rented to various individuals before 1910 became a semi-official residence of the park foreman until the administration of the reservation was transferred to the National Park Service in 1933.<sup>83</sup>

In 1903 Louis P. Shoemaker, then president of the Brightwood Citizens Association, advocated that the Pierce family buildings in the park be restored. His proposal included the preservation of the Pierce Mill as a historic attraction depicting early industrial endeavors in Rock Creek Valley and transforming the Pierce-Kingle mansion into a nature center and museum.<sup>84</sup> In 1908 Shoemaker repeated his proposals in a lecture on the history of Rock Creek delivered at a meeting of the Columbia Historic Society.<sup>85</sup> He also suggested that band concerts would be welcome events on the grounds of the old buildings. The Brightwood Citizens Association lobbied the District commissioners and submitted inquiries to park officials in 1913-1914 to consider these goals but no action was taken. There were also other proposals for restoring the mill's waterwheel as a pictureque feature.<sup>86</sup>

However, by 1914 the wheelpit and mill race were badly deteriorated. To improve the Pierce Mill grounds, this ditch was filled. At this time Lee R. Grabill, the park's superintendent, addressed the mounting Pierce Mill wheel restoration requests:

Frequent suggestions have been made as to the placing of a water wheel at the Pierce Mill. It has always seemed to me that the placing of a wheel at this point now, when there is no machinery to which it could be used to run it without considerable expense, would be in bad taste on account of the fact it would be merely a sham.<sup>87</sup>

In Grabill's view, the mill was needed as a "shelter, recreation center, and perhaps a bandstand." The Board of Control concurred in this opinion and prior to World War I, Pierce Mill continued to be used as a tea house and also contained a "Red Cross Room."<sup>88</sup> The facility was operated by Mary Louis Noble and Florence I. Blake during the park board's administration. Apparently, the facility was a profitable enterprise serving beverages, sandwiches, salads, and cold luncheon plates. Blake eventually lost the concession because of her failure to pay the rent promptly. Management troubles were also a factor in her removal.<sup>89</sup> An employee at the tea house related to the engineers that Blake's "mismanagement, poor service, exorbitant prices, and poor standing with dealers" had ruined the business.<sup>90</sup> In 1919 Blake was ordered to vacate the premises and apparently left in haste, leaving behind furniture and a piano. Also found on the premises were "two hundred and fifty empty whiskey bottles and a great amount of trash."<sup>91</sup>

After the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds assumed responsibility for management of the park, Colonel Clarence S. Ridley, Officer in Charge, instructed the agency's architect Horace W. Peaslee to survey Pierce Mill and to make recommendations for improvements of the facility. Peaslee collaborated with staff landscape architect Irving W. Payne and together they prepared recommendations for upgrading the mill and its surroundings. Peaslee and Payne filed a preliminary report on April 22, 1919, which noted the condition of the mill at that time:

This old mill is an historical land mark. It is built of stone, very solid in construction, its floor beams and girders of oak, mostly in good condition. Two sets of stones are still in place and three extra stones stand nearby. Wooden pin gear wheels are in the pit below, the gate

wheel on the inside of the building is in place. This is all that remains of the old milling facilities but it is probably enough to materially help create the proper atmosphere within. Water-wheel, gate, flume, grain bins, chutes and elevators have all disappeared. Modern windows have been substituted for the old, which were probably fitted with old style wooden shutters. The easterly Dutch door still carries evidence of being original. The westerly door is uncertain as to origin. The woodwork is in bad condition where exposed to the weather.<sup>92</sup>

A list of recommendations followed the general description of the building. Most of these suggestions were minor, such as laying a concrete floor in the basement, cleaning and staining woodwork, and replacement of window sash. However, Peaslee did propose a water-wheel restoration as a means of creating atmosphere for the adaptive use of the mill as a country inn or coffee house featuring outdoor dining. Improvements were also suggested for the grounds of the mill to simplify the circulation pattern of pedestrians, horseback riders, and automobiles. In the preliminary report Peaslee recommended the construction of a screened porch on the east side of the mill which would be constructed out of stone to match the building having arches below the first floor, square stone columns on the first floor suitable to the building, and a wood roof shingled and gabled to match the roof and gable end finish of the house.<sup>93</sup>

In his final report submitted in November, 1919, Peaslee deleted the porch addition. Over the summer months he had visited and studied the construction details and operation of several old mills in Thoroughfare Gap, Virginia, and decided the addition would be "out of keeping with any conception of an old mill."<sup>94</sup> Nevertheless, a porch with a similar design to Peaslee's addition was erected on the north side of the building by 1931. General cleaning and painting and sash and woodwork replacement were accomplished in 1919, but the mill wheel restoration and proposed landscape changes were not implemented. Payne submitted a revised report for the improvement of the grounds in 1920, which recognized as fundamental "the intrinsic charm of the naturalesque in its future developments, so that its present distinct features may be preserved and accentuated."<sup>95</sup> His plan was inexpensive and required only the enhancement of existing plant material and simplified traffic circulation in the vicinity of the mill by redirecting pedestrian and horse trails away from automobile traffic on Pierce Mill Bridge.

In 1920 Hattie L. Sewell, a black woman, was granted the concession to the teahouse at Pierce Mill. Business increased by 200 percent over that of her predecessor, but persistent racially motivated complaints by the trustee of the Pierce-Shoemaker estate eventually led to a decision not to renew Sewell's lease. The teahouse was then operated by the Girl Scouts Association of the District of Columbia. The group ran the concession until 1922, after which the Welfare and Recreational Association of Public Buildings and Grounds, Inc., a charitable organization within the War Department, operated the facility until it was closed in 1934 to prepare for the building's restoration.<sup>96</sup>

One of the earliest facilities introduced into Rock Creek Park was Camp Goodwill. This summer camp for deprived white children and their mothers began its operations in 1905 under the sponsorship of the Committee on the Prevention of Consumption.<sup>97</sup> A precedent for the temporary charitable use of the park had been established in 1892. Captain Gustav Fieburger had allowed the Washington Hospital for Foundlings to use the Page House for several summers to escape the heat of the city. The building was located on a high knoll across Rock Creek from the Pierce-Kingle mansion and was razed by the engineers in 1906.<sup>98</sup>

Camp Goodwill and its affiliate, the Baby Hospital Camp, were placed on the Cowden and Freas farms, which were located between the Milk House Ford and Sixteenth Street to the north of Military Road. The seasonal camp provided a two-week holiday from the squalor and oppressive heat of Washington's alley dwellings to poor children and their mothers during the summer. Progressive social reformers provided a clean, healthy camp and plenty of wholesome food, organized play and country air to restore the health of the "unfortunate" and their "tired" mothers.<sup>99</sup> Camp Goodwill was described in a 1914 newspaper article in this fashion:

The two months of the summer bring many visitors, all of whom exclaim over the beauty of the spot, and one cannot wonder for it is indeed a charming sight. The old rambling, white painted farmhouse, with its white outbuildings set among beautiful trees; the white canvas tents glistening in the sunlight, the croquet grounds, see-saws, swings, tetherpole, sandboxes, and baseball grounds, all occupied by happy children, while in the shade of splendid old trees, rocking, resting, sewing, or talking happily, are the mothers with their babies.<sup>100</sup>

The Summer Outings Committee of the Associated Charities, the local charity which administered the camp in this period, actively promoted the camp and its counterpart, Camp Pleasant at Deanwood, for black children. Committee members included some of Washington's most prominent social reformers, such as Dr. George M. Kober and John Joy Edson, who were also instrumental in promoting public health and housing reform.<sup>101</sup> The construction of a golfcourse on the land area occupied by Camp Goodwill required relocation of the facility to a six acre site on the west side of Rock Creek in 1923. Temporary frame buildings, including an administration building, dining hall, nursery, bath houses, and tent platforms were erected and playing fields were laid out. The camp continued to accomodate 150 mothers and children for two week periods until 1936 when the facility was relocated to Chopawamsic, near Quantico, Virginia. The camp site in Rock Creek Park was later used by the Civilian Conservation Corps and the U. S. Army during War War II. None of the buildings erected at this site in this period are extant.<sup>102</sup>

To varying degrees early intrusions into the park influenced site selections for early sports facilities. In 1900 the D. C. Water Department obtained Congressional authorization for the construction of the Brightwood Reservoir, located on a site occupied today by the Rock Creek Tennis Stadium, tennis courts, and ballfields between Morrow Drive and Carter Barron Theater. The Board of Control opposed this action, but presented with what appeared to be the inevitable enactment by Congress of legislation authorizing the siting of the reservoir in the park, they negotiated a land exchange compromise with the bills' proponents. The Board surrendered use of parkland to the Water Department in exchange for the city's purchase of private land on the eastern boundary of the park. The resulting agreement gave the Water Department its reservoir and a site it desired and the Board was able to rectify a section of the boundary along Sixteenth Street.<sup>103</sup>

As a result of the installation of the reservoir, this area of the park was considered an acceptable site for recreational facilities. In 1907 a nine-hole golfcourse was laid out adjacent to the Brightwood Reservoir. It was hoped that enthusiasm for the sport would generate the purchase of additional private acreage adjoining the park on the west side of Sixteenth Street to expand the course to eighteen holes.<sup>104</sup> A 1909 newspaper account concerning the potential construction of a clubhouse for the golfcourse indicated that a

potential site would be near the intersection of Blagden Avenue and Sixteenth Street south of the reservoir.<sup>105</sup> A lack of funds evidently stymied these plans. A nine-hole golfcourse was laid out and grass seed planted, but neither the course or clubhouse went beyond this initial planning phase. However, the work of clearing the land was not wasted because in 1916 playing fields, a large picnic area, shelters, and tennis courts were built adjacent to the reservoir. By the 1930s the Brightwood Reservoir had become obsolete when new reservoirs were built in outlying areas of the city near Great Falls. The Civilian Conservation Corps infilled the reservoir in 1937, but the pattern of active recreational development in the area has been continued into modern times.

A notable intrusion to the park's natural character in 1911 was the establishment of an arboretum for experimental tree planting along Rock Creek to the north, south and east of Camp Goodwill by the U. S. Forest Service. A cooperative agreement was reached between the Board and the Forest Service to allow the federal agency to use the site primarily for experiments in the hybridization of willow trees. However, by 1914 seventy species had been introduced into this section of the park representing every region in the United States. Some of these trees, particularly the California Redwoods, did not survive. By 1920 2,000 trees of 170 species were being cultivated in the park. There was a movement in the late 1910s to formalize this arrangement with the establishment of a permanent arboretum and the addition of a botanical garden.<sup>106</sup> The U. S. Commission of Fine Arts, which had been requested by Congress to review potential sites for the relocation of the Mall botanical gardens in 1916, strongly opposed any plan that would use Rock Creek Park for this purpose.<sup>107</sup> Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. quoted the commission's report at length in his 1918 planning study for Rock Creek Park. He emphasized the point that the establishment of the arboretum in the park had been a grave mistake that threatened to destroy the natural beauty of the landscape if it was continued and expanded. In 1920 the experiment was discontinued. Within a year Colonel Sherrill began planning a new use for the area and ordered the start of construction of fairways for the Rock Creek golf course.

During the planning phase for the golf course, former President Woodrow Wilson wrote Sherrill to lodge a strong objection to its construction in the park:

Is it possible that it is true that a golf course is to be laid out in Rock Creek Park? I am loath to believe that such an unforgivable piece of vandalism is even in contemplation, and therefore beg leave to enter my earnest and emphatic protest. That park is the most beautiful in the United States, and to mar its natural beauty for the sake of sport would be to do an irretrievable thing which subsequent criticism and regret could never repair.<sup>108</sup>

Concerned by the tone of the letter but remaining firm in his belief that the golf course was an appropriate addition to this section of the park, Sherrill immediately wrote to request the support from his superior officer, Chief of Engineers Major General Lansing H. Beach, who had been so instrumental in Rock Creek Park's early development. The Colonel asked Beach to request a small appropriation from Congress to begin construction of the golf course. He feared that any effort to establish the facility without specific authority from Congress might create "so much hostility among members of Congress as to jeopardize any future hope of securing funds to make a really first-class golf course."<sup>109</sup>

Sherrill responded to the former president in an evasive fashion and did not admit that the plans were already in the works. He diplomatically explained that the land considered for use in the park as the golf course had been cleared of trees before its purchase by the government and was inaccessible to the public. He described the tract as "overgrown with brambles and poison ivy as to be entirely worthless."<sup>110</sup> The Colonel also assured Wilson that a "golf course could be so constructed as not to affect the natural beauty of the tract while its use for this purpose is not apt to mar the appearance as much as constantly occurs at every picnic ground."<sup>111</sup> Wilson was apparently satisfied by the response and through his secretary conveyed his relief regarding the choice of the site for the proposed golf course.<sup>112</sup>

In October, 1921, the rough outline for the fairways of a nine-hole golf course were laid out by landscape architect Irving W. Payne under the authority of Colonel Sherrill.<sup>113</sup> In January, 1922, Colonel Sherrill requested and obtained the services of golf course architect William S. Flynn of Ardmore, Pennsylvania.<sup>114</sup> Flynn was a leader in the field of golf course design at this time and today is considered an American master of golf course architecture. His masterpiece was the revision of the course at Shinnecock Hills on Long Island, New York, but his courses at Spring Mill and Rolling Hills, both

outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, are also highly regarded.<sup>115</sup> Flynn worked as a consultant on the design of Rock Creek golf course and spent two days going over the ground to locate the tees and greens. The final course design, apparently incorporating Flynn's verbal suggestions, was prepared by Payne. The first nine holes of the Rock Creek golf course opened in 1923 with a remodeled farmhouse as its clubhouse.<sup>116</sup> A second nine-hole course was laid out and opened by 1927. The immediate popularity of the course was reflected by the fact that more than 75,000 golfers played the course in that year.<sup>117</sup> The facility remains a popular recreational attraction in the park and has been in continuous operation since 1923.

In contrast to the Brightwood Reservoir and arboretum which were replaced by sports facilities, an unwanted building was moved into the park in 1912 and remains extant. In 1911 the California State Association requested that the Board of Control allow the group to move the Joaquin Miller cabin, threatened with demolition, into Rock Creek Park. Initially the Board refused the request. Cincinnatus H. Miller had built the cabin in 1883 on Crescent Street across from Meridian Hill Park and lived there briefly while lobbying for a diplomatic post within the Cleveland administration. Unable to obtain a desired position as an ambassador, Miller left Washington in 1885. Renowned for his colorful personality, Miller adopted the dress of the western frontiersmen and the name Joaquin as his eccentric signature. He wrote numerous books of poetry, but after the publication of the volume of poems, Song of the Sierras, his fame was established. Although his work was popular in his lifetime, his works are not considered classics of American poetry.<sup>118</sup>

State pride was an issue in the Miller cabin siting controversy and Senator John D. Works (R- CA), interceded on the behalf of his constituents. In a letter to President William H. Taft, Works remarked:

The people of California being three thousand miles away, get very little benefit from the improvements that are made in the national capital and see but little of its beauties. It does seem that so small a favor as this, stongly supported by the sentiment of the people of California, should be granted without hesitation.<sup>119</sup>

Taft directed the senator's letter to the Board of Control with the request that a memorandum be prepared on the cabin issue. With the political stakes significantly raised, the Board approved reconstruction of the cabin in the park

with conditions and informed the president of this decision in their reply. The Board's conditions were relocation without expense to the government, use and maintenance of the cabin as a park shelter, and the authority to remove the building if this should be necessary.<sup>120</sup> This compromise satisfied the Californians and the building was moved into the park just off Beach Drive, approximately one-half mile north of Military Road, and was dedicated on June 2, 1912. The cabin became an "adopted" historic attraction in the park and was soon a meeting point in the northern section of the park for picnic groups, hikers, and horseback riders. For at least a decade after the relocation, the California State Association held an "annual pilgrimage" to the Miller cabin. The festivities included decoration of the cabin with flags, shields, and bunting, musical entertainment, and the delivery of a speech by a member of Congress from California.<sup>121</sup> By 1918 the meadow in the vicinity of the Miller cabin had developed into one of the largest picnic areas in the park, rivaled only by the facilities at the Pierce Mill and Brightwood Reservoir areas.<sup>122</sup> In 1931 the Miller cabin was leased by the poet's niece, Pherne Miller, who taught summer art classes and sold soft drinks and candy there until the mid-1950s.<sup>123</sup> Park officials seriously considered moving the building in 1972 after flooding caused by Hurricane Agnes damaged the structure. Vandalism has also been a recurrent problem at the building because of its isolated location.<sup>124</sup> However, the cabin was not moved and, although it is in poor condition, retains sufficient integrity to recall its strong historic association with the park's recreational development.

In the period 1890 to 1933 Rock Creek Park evolved from a little-known and remote public reservation into a vital recreational resource within the city of Washington. The rustic aesthetic of Rock Creek Park's improvements during its military custodianship was conservative. The once ubiquitous log shelters, picnic tables, benches, signs, fences and guard rails were all meant to be impermanent, harmonious and subordinate to the park's landscape. In 1918 the Olmsted Plan would praise this work in a discussion of guidelines for artistic construction in the park: "The split rail fences along the roadsides and many of the foot-bridges now found in the Park are happy examples of this fitness of design."<sup>125</sup> With the exception of selected bridges, the engineers left few conspicuous landmarks. Yet, the Army engineers did leave an indelible mark on the park's identity. Their legacy was the construction of the road circulation system that blended unobtrusively into the

natural setting, selective preservation and adaptive reuse of nineteenth century historic landmarks, and the addition of active recreational facilities. In 1933 the National Park Service assumed managerial responsibility for Rock Creek Park, largely based on its reputation of creative interpretation of public lands under its care. This administrative shift opened a new era in the reservation's history as a modern metropolitan park.

## CHAPTER V

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Restricted vehicular access to the park was reflected in period guidebooks. For example, the Rand McNally Handy Guide to Washington(1896), contained only a brief mention of Rock Creek Park:

The forested gorge of this romantic stream, east of the [Connecticut] avenue, and embracing most of the region between it and the proposed extension of Sixteenth Street, or the "Executive Avenue," has been acquired and reserved by the Government as a public park; but as yet no improvements have been attempted, and it remains a wild, rambling-ground full of grand possibilities for the landscape artist.

See Ernest Ingwersoll, Handy Guide to Washington and the District of Columbia (Chicago and New York: Rand, McNally & Company, Publishers, 1896), p.155.

<sup>2</sup>Hugh McMahon to Commissioners of the District of Columbia, May 15, 1890, Letters Received by the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908, RG 42, Entry 240, File 104, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>3</sup>"List of Houses in Rock Creek Park, Character of Improvements, Name of Tenant and Amount Charged for the Month," April, 1896, Letters Received by the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908, RG 42, Entry 240, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>4</sup>Office of the Engineer Commissioner to Captain G. J. Fieburger (Copy), April 1, 1895, Letters Received by the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908, RG 42, Entry 240, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>5</sup>Letters Received by the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908, RG 42, Entry 240; for the Board's order see Minutes of the Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, 1894-1917, RG 42, Entry 239, NARA, Washington, D. C.

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<sup>6</sup>Barry Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History, (Washington: National Park Service, Department of Interior, 1985), pp. 23-25.

<sup>7</sup>Evening Star (Washington), September 1, 1900.

<sup>8</sup>For the history of the Brightwood neighborhood and its citizen's association, see Katherine Grandine, "Brightwood: From Tollgate to Suburb," in Kathryn S. Smith, ed., Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of the Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital (Northridge, Ca.: Windsor Press, 1988), pp. 89-95.

<sup>9</sup>Louis P. Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," Records of the Columbia Historical Society, 12 (1901), pp. 38-52; and William V. Cox, "Notes on the Establishment of a National Park in the District of Columbia and the Acquisition and Improvement of the Valley of Rock Creek for Park Purposes," in Charles Moore, ed., Park Improvement Papers: A Series of Twenty Papers Relating to the Improvement of Park System of the District of Columbia. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), pp. 99-140.

<sup>10</sup>A copy of the resolutions and press clippings related to this subject are located in Letters Received by the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908, RG 42, Entry 240, File 10649, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., The statement was published in the Evening Star (Washington), October 10, 1896.

<sup>12</sup>William V. Cox, "Action of the Board of Trade in Relation to the Park System of the District of Columbia," in Charles Moore, ed., Park Improvement Papers: A Series of Twenty Papers Relating to the Improvement of Park System of the District of Columbia. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), pp. 6-7.

<sup>13</sup>For a detailed discussion of the planning politics of Washington's Centennial celebration, see Jon A. Peterson, "The Hidden Origins of the McMillan Plan for Washington, D. C. 1900-1902," Occasional Paper #1, (Washington: Center for Washington Area Studies, 1984), pp. 3-13; and see also Peterson's "The Nation's First Comprehensive Plan," Journal of the American Planning Association 51 (Spring), pp. 134-150. Peterson's articles provided a synthesis of nearly two decades of scholarship related to the history of the McMillan commission with full bibliographic information.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Brown's intensive support of the campaign, led by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham, helped the AIA gain implementation of the 1893 Tarsney Act. This hard won statute gave the Secretary of the Treasury the discretionary power to award design commissions for major government

buildings to private architects. Brown intensified his political activities on behalf of the architectural profession in 1895 and organized a national fine arts lobby known as the Public Art League. This organization promoted legislation which would have established an expert commission of architects and artists to advise the federal government on its patronage of architecture, art, and sculpture. The League's bill, which was a forerunner of legislation that established the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts in 1910, was presented in the House and Senate but failed to win a favorable report from the committees assigned to review the legislation. William Bushong, "Glenn Brown, the American Institute of Architects and the Development of the Civic Core of Washington, D. C." (Ph.d Dissertation, George Washington University, 1988).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Evening Star (Washington), March 19, 1901.

<sup>20</sup>As quoted by Peterson, The Hidden Origins of the McMillan Plan, pp. 3-13. A detailed legislative history of the resolution is presented in this article.

<sup>21</sup>Evening Star (Washington), March 22, 1901.

<sup>22</sup>For a discussion of the social, economic, and political considerations of the City Beautiful Movement, see Christine M. Boyer, Dreaming the Rational City (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1983), pp. 9-32; and for a discussion of the cultural milieu, see Richard Guy Wilson, The American Renaissance, 1876-1917 (New York: Brooklyn Museum and Pantheon Books, 1979).

<sup>23</sup>See John Reps, Monumental Washington: The Planning and Development of the Capital Center (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), chapters 5 and 6; and Frederick Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), chapter 5.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Quotations in this paragraph are taken from Charles Moore, ed., The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), pp. 3 and 15. For a discussion of Charles Moore's career and his influence as first a member and then chairman of the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts, see Sue A. Kohler, A Brief History of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, 1910-1976 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1976), pp. 51-52.

<sup>27</sup>Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation, chapter 5. See also Susan L. Klaus, "Intelligent and Comprehensive Planning of a Common Sense Kind": Frederick Law Olmsted, Junior, and the Emergence of Comprehensive Planning in America, 1900-1920." (MA Thesis, George Washington University, 1988).

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<sup>28</sup>Quotations in this paragraph were extracted from the commission's discussion of the future treatment of Rock Creek Park in Charles Moore, ed., The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902).

<sup>29</sup>This figure is recorded in the Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), p. 22.

<sup>30</sup>The Board of Control's position concerning the planning and development of Rock Creek Park was described in a letter from Charles W. Kutz to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., December 27, 1916. The recreation plan was detailed in a memorandum from M. C. Hazen to J. J. Loving, September 22, 1916. Both documents are located in File 135706. RG 42, Entry 241. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C. Melvin C. Hazen was a civilian engineer in the Engineer Commissioner's office since the 1890s and after 1908 became Surveyor of the District of Columbia. During this period he was instrumental in surveying and planning the city's street extensions. He was later appointed a Commissioner of the District of Columbia in 1933. Reservation 630, acquired in two parcels in 1939 and 1950, was once occupied by the Bureau of Standards and is adjacent to Rock Creek Park. It has been named in Hazen's honor.

<sup>29</sup>Copy of memorandum of William W. Harts to Chief of Engineers, November 17, 1916. File 135706. RG 42, Entry 241. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>32</sup>Evening Star (Washington), December 3, 1916.

<sup>33</sup>Charles W. Kutz to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., December 27, 1916 and March 13, 1917. File 135706. RG 42, Entry 241. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C.

<sup>34</sup>Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to Charles W. Kutz, March 20, 1917. File 135706. RG 42, Entry 241. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>35</sup>See Memorandum for the Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, April 13, 1917, and Colonel Charles W. Kutz to General William M. Black, April 21, 1917. File 135706. RG 42, Entry 241. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>36</sup>Olmsted Brothers to the Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, August 14, 1917, File 135706. RG 42, Entry 241. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>37</sup>"Rock Creek Park, A Report by Olmsted Brothers, December, 1918." Unpublished typescript. Copy on File at the Rock Creek Nature Center Library, Rock Creek Park, Washington, D. C.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>James L. Greenleaf to Colonel Clarence S. Ridley, February 6, 1919. File 303/74a. RG 42, Entry 303. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>42</sup>Barry Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History. (Washington: Department of the Interior, 1985), pp. 20 and 41.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21 and 70-71.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., pp. 65-66 and 76. Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907), p. 33.

<sup>45</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 65.

<sup>46</sup>The key components of the act as quoted in Frederick Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), p. 170.

<sup>47</sup>Gutheim, Worthy of the Nation, pp. 197 and 206. See also Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 68-69 and 77-78.

<sup>48</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 15 and 126.

<sup>49</sup>These letter files are located in RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 240--Letters Received by the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908 and Entry 244--Applications and Recommendation for Appointments to Positions in Rock Creek Park, 1892-1896. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>50</sup>Letter File 169. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 240--Letters Received by the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>51</sup>Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park (1907), pp. 19-22. An edited and updated version of this report without illustrations was also printed in 1912.

<sup>52</sup>Evening Star (Washington), October 3, 1903. Photographs of the roadwork and the log trestle bridge were also provided in this news article.

<sup>53</sup> Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park (1907), pp.19-22; see also a 1904 report by Willam P. Richards. which included a history of improvements in the park to that date. File 267. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 240-Letters Received by the Engineer Comissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908. NARA, Washington, D. C. For road mileage figures under the Board of Control's management see, Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), pp. 2062.

<sup>54</sup> Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park (1907), pp.19-22; see also Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park (1912), pp. 10-21. Also see William P. Richards Report (1904). File 267. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 240-Letters Received by the Engineer Comissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>55</sup> William P. Richards Report (1904). File 267. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 240-Letters Received by the Engineer Comissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 31-34.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. See also Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers (1921), pp. 2062.

<sup>59</sup> For a map and discussion of the proposed lines, see "Supplementary Report of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park," (1915). RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 245--Records of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park, 1907-1918. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>60</sup> "Report of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park," (1914). RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 245--Records of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park, 1907-1918. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>61</sup> "Report of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park," (1907). RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 245--Records of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park, 1907-1918. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>62</sup> Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 24. See also newspaper reports concerning tour bus service, Evening Star (Washington), March 11, 1909 and August 10, 1909.

<sup>63</sup> "Traffic Report, April 10, 1910," RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 245--Records of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park, 1907-1918. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>64</sup>"22 Miles of Drives Now Open in Rock Creek Park," Evening Star (Washington), July 26, 1925.

<sup>65</sup>Road improvements in Rock Creek Park in this period are summarized in Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919-1925). Quotation taken from Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 44.

<sup>66</sup>See William P. Richards to Major John Biddle, January 3, 1903. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 240--Letters Received by the Engineer Comissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908. NARA, Washington, D. C. Brown's bill for designs services in 1901-1902 was an enclosure with this letter. See also W. J. Douglas, "Pebble Faced Bridge in the National Park, Washington, D. C." Engineering News 49 (January 22, 1903), pp. 70-74; and Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 22.

<sup>67</sup>H. G. Tyrell, "American Park Bridges," American Architect and Building News 81 (March 30, 1901), pp. 99-101. For a discussion of Glenn Brown's bridge designs for the Zoological Park, see William B. Bushong, "Glenn Brown, the American Institute of Architects, and the Development of the Civic Core of Washington, D. C." (Ph.D. Dissertation, George Washington University, 1988), pp. 26-28.

<sup>68</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 22.

<sup>69</sup>Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), p. 2062.

<sup>70</sup>Marsha M. Miller, "Ross Drive Bridge," Historic American Engineering Record Survey, (HAER No. DC-13), Copy on File HABS-HAER, Washington, D. C. See also "A Light Three-Hinged Concrete Arch Bridge, Washington, D. C." Engineering News (May 21, 1908), pp. 555-556.

<sup>71</sup>Zack Spratt, "Rock Creek Bridges," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 53-56 (1959), p. 106.

<sup>72</sup>Marsha M. Miller, "Pinehurst Bridge," Historic American Engineering Record Survey, (HAER No. DC-15), Copy on File HABS-HAER, Washington, D. C.

<sup>73</sup>Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park (1912), pp. 19-20. Spratt, "Rock Creek Bridges," p. 108.

<sup>74</sup>Spratt, "Rock Creek Bridges," p. 112-113.

<sup>75</sup>Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park (1907), pp. 26-27. See also RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 239--Minutes of the Board of Control, Rock Creek Park. November 3, 1903. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>76</sup>Spratt, "Rock Creek Bridges," p. 115.

<sup>77</sup>Donald B. Myer, Bridges and the City of Washington (Washington: U. S. Commission of Fine Arts, 1974), pp. 73-74. Proctor was also the sculptor for the more famous buffaloes on the Dumbarton Bridge on Q Street.

<sup>78</sup>Charles McLaughlin, "Pierce Mill Bridge," Unpublished Historic Structures Report, Copy on File at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>79</sup>Spratt, "Rock Creek Bridges," p. 106. See also "Ever Try Bridge Hunting in Rock Creek Park," Evening Star (Washington), October 20, 1936.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., pp. 107 and 111-112.

<sup>81</sup>Marsha M. Miller, "Old Military Bridge (Joyce Road)," Historic American Engineering Record Survey, (HAER No. DC-18), Copy on File HABS-HAER, Washington, D. C.

<sup>82</sup>The location of fords in 1907 and 1933 are noted on the "Map of Rock Creek Park Showing Roads and Bridal Trails," in the appendix in the Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, (1907) and "Rock Creek Park, Washington, D. C.," (Revision 1933), RG 66. U. S. Commission of Fine Arts, Cartographic Division, NARA, Alexandria, Virginia.

<sup>83</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 28 and 97-98.

<sup>84</sup>Evening Star (Washington), August 15, 1903.

<sup>85</sup>Louis P. Shoemaker, "Historic Rock Creek," Records of the Columbia Historical Society, 12 (1908), pp. 47-50.

<sup>86</sup>See Charles W. Ray (Secretary, Brightwood Citizen's Association) to the Secretary of the Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, October 30 and November 3, 1913 and Louis P. Shoemaker to Engineer Commissioner, November 19, 1913 and April 22, 1914. See also Richard B. Watrous to Lt. Col. Chester Harding, September 22, 1914. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 241--Correspondence of the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1897-1918. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>87</sup>Lee R. Grabill to Secretary, Board of Control, Rock Creek Park, May 26, 1914. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. Entry 241--Correspondence of the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1897-1918. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>88</sup>The 1918 lease agreement for the Pierce Mill tea house concession stated "the room in said Pierce Mill known as the Red Cross Room is not included in the property hereby leased." Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the

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Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>89</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 28.

<sup>90</sup>Matilda Campbell to Colonel C. S. Ridley, August 22, 1919. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>91</sup>Memorandum, January 21, 1920. Francis F. Gillen to Colonel C. S. Ridley. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>92</sup>Horace W. Peaslee to Colonel C. S. Ridley, April 22, 1919. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid.

<sup>94</sup>Report of Architect on Restoration of Pierce's Mill in Rock Creek Park, November 28, 1919. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>95</sup>Irving W. Payne, "Report of Preliminary Sketch Plan for Grounds of Pierce Mill, Rock Creek Park. December 7, 1920." Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>96</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 28-31.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>98</sup>See Mrs. J. C. Smith to Captain Gustav J. Fieburger, April 18, 1893. Entry 244. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.; and see also Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park (1907), p. 29.

<sup>99</sup>Evening Star (Washington), July 16, 1914.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>An example of the Summer Outing Committee promotional material is located in correspondence between Walter S. Ufford and Engineer Commissioner Kutz concerning minor improvements to Camp Goodwill, May 29, 1917. Entry 241. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>102</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 108-109.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-36.

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<sup>104</sup>Report of the Secretary, Board of Control of Rock Creek Park (1907), p.15. The proposed golfcourse layout and extension is indicated on the map in the appendix to this report.

<sup>105</sup>Evening Star (Washington), September 21, 1909.

<sup>106</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 36-37.

<sup>107</sup>The report was printed in The Commission of Fine Arts, Annual Report, June 30, 1916- January 1, 1918 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918).

<sup>108</sup>Woodrow Wilson to Colonel Clarence S. Sherrill, June 21, 1921. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>109</sup>Lieutenant Colonel C. O. Sherrill to Major General Lansing H. Beach, June 25, 1921. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>110</sup>Sherrill to Wilson, June 28, 1921. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid.

<sup>112</sup>John R. Bolling to Col. C. O. Sherrill, June 30, 1921. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>113</sup>C. O. Sherrill, Memorandum, October 22, 1921. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>114</sup>C. O. Sherrill to William S. Flynn, January 21, 1922 and Flynn to Sherrill, January 19, 1922. Entry 303. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

<sup>115</sup>Len Elliott and Barbara Kelly, Who's Who in Golf (New Rochelle, N. Y.: Arlington House, 1976), pp. 65-66.

<sup>116</sup>Evening Star (Washington), February 18, 1923.

<sup>117</sup>Annual Report of the Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital (1927), p. 39.

<sup>118</sup>Leonard J. Furber, "Joaquin Miller and the Miller Cabin," Unpublished Typescript, 1947. Copy on File Rock Creek Park Nature Center Library, Washington, D. C.

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119 Senator John D. Works to President William H. Taft, June 3, 1911. Entry 241. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

120 Related correspondence to this decision in in File 94245/3. Entry 241. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

121 Harry Ashlon (Chairman, Social Committe, California State Association) to Col. C. O. Sherrill, June 12, 1921 and Sherrill to Ashlon, June 15, 1921 RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

122 List of Picnic Grounds in Rock Creek Park. Entry 245--Records of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park, 1907-1918. RG 42. Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. NARA, Washington, D. C.

123 Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 27-28.

124 Memorandum, March 30, 1973, Luther C. Burnett, Superintendent, National Capital Parks--West to Director, National Capital Parks. Copy on File Rock Creek Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

125 Rock Creek Park, A Report by Olmsted Brothers, December, 1918." Unpublished typescript. Copy on File at the Rock Creek Nature Center Library, Rock Creek Park, Washington, D. C.

## CHAPTER VI

## Rock Creek Park in the Modern Era, 1933-Present.

On March 4, 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was inaugurated as president, promising a "New Deal for the American people," who at this time were enduring the bleakest period of the Great Depression. His pledge would result in the implementation by the federal government of a diverse group of programs aimed at restoring public confidence, raising revenue and effecting economic recovery. The programs put into effect during the 1930s, ultimately expanded the role of the government in the lives of individual citizens, as well as the economic and social affairs of the nation. A major component of the planned economic recovery was the creation of a massive program of public works projects to provide jobs. For example, the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Public Works Administration (PWA) served to create the manpower and monetary resources for improvements to state and national parks. The identity of Rock Creek Park, like that of many other public landscapes, was significantly affected by the New Deal programs.

On August 10, 1933, Executive Order 6166 became effective. This order caused a major reorganization of the executive branch. As it impacted the National Park Service, Executive Order 6166 consolidated the administration of national monuments and battlefields and placed them under the agency's care. Before this time three separate departments managed these federal cultural and historic sites. As a result of the administrative reorganization brought about by Executive Order 6166, Rock Creek Park became a part of the National Capital Parks under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, which had been established as a government agency in 1916. Horace M. Albright was the prime mover in the Service's acquisition of these new responsibilities. Albright was an ambitious and energetic director of the National Park Service, and was politically well-connected. It was his objective to enhance the influence of his bureau.<sup>1</sup>

Albright lobbied influential Roosevelt administration officials and subsequently obtained his goal of management responsibility for national monuments and battlefields. As a bonus, he also acquired stewardship of the District's federal park reservations. The Office of Public Buildings and Public

Parks of the National Capital, which had custody of Washington parks from 1926 to 1933, was abolished. Albright recognized that the National Park Service's administration of these parks would enhance the prestige of the young agency and provide Congress with a highly conspicuous sample of its work. Before the 1933 reorganization, the National Park Service had been oriented toward the management of western wilderness areas. Administration of city parks was not considered to be the mission of the "real Park Service." As historian Barry Mackintosh has noted, this "dichotomy between the National Park Service and National Capital Parks persists to the present in the minds of many Service traditionalists."<sup>2</sup>

On June 16, 1933, the Public Works Administration was established under Title II of the National Industrial Recovery Act. The purpose of this agency was to stimulate the economy by creating a fund of 3.3 billion dollars for public works. The National Park Service, like other federal agencies, received substantial grants for construction and maintenance projects. Between 1934 and 1938 PWA grants funded the construction of new bridges and buildings, restoration of Pierce Mill, completion of the Piney Branch Parkway, and upgrading and paving of the existing vehicular circulation system in Rock Creek Park. This chapter focuses on the physical development of the park in the 1930s and summarizes modern land uses.

### Rock Creek Park in the New Deal Era

The first construction program funded by the PWA in Rock Creek Park was the replacement of a series of foot and bridle path bridges destroyed by high winds and rain in August, 1933. The flooding resulting from this storm inundated sections of Rock Creek Park with two to four feet of water. Storm damage was severe and required the replacement of eight foot and bridle path bridges, the repair of three highway bridges, and wholesale replacement of the park's rustic picnic tables and benches.<sup>3</sup> In 1934-35 five new bridle and foot bridges were erected in Rock Creek Park with PWA monies. These structures included the Bluffs, Rapids, Rolling Meadow, Riley Spring, and Boundary Bridges, all of which are extant today.

This distinctive group of bridges was designed by the Branch of Plans and Designs of the National Park Service's Landscape Division. This branch also provided the designs and working drawings for all other national parks

in this period. The influential director of the landscape division was Thomas C. Vint. Vint had joined the Service's Landscape Division as a young architectural draftsman at Yosemite in 1922 and by the late 1920s had advanced to the position of division chief in San Francisco. His influence on National Park Service design policies was profound and during the 1920s he initiated the preparation of master plans for each of the national parks. By the 1930s he was the "controlling figure" in the NPS rustic architecture program and was largely responsible for the Service's widespread adoption of a style of building design known today as "parkitecture."<sup>4</sup>

The PWA and Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) allotments generated a massive work load for Vint's design and drafting force in the Branch of Plans and Designs. The office expanded rapidly to provide drawings for public works projects in the national parks, and an Eastern Division with offices in Philadelphia was subsequently established. By 1935 the branch had evolved into a plan factory with 120 architects, landscape architects, and engineers on staff. In the next year the staff further grew to accommodate 220 professionals when a share of design assistance duties for state parks was assigned to the Branch of Plans and Designs. Before the boom of PWA and ECW projects in 1933, Vint had been able to personally train his staff and critique their work. However, the project load increased to the point that these duties had to be delegated to senior office members.<sup>5</sup>

In response to the need for a training manual for the large staff and to maintain consistent standards of design in the national parks, the National Park Service prepared a park architecture textbook. In 1935 the agency's Division of Planning published a manual entitled Park Structures and Facilities with the stated intention of exerting "a beneficial influence on the design of park structures everywhere."<sup>6</sup> The publication contained 20 chapters on the design of park structures and facilities that ranged from small improvements like signs or trail steps to larger construction projects, such as the erection of administration and service buildings. The book was heavily illustrated with examples of successful designs, and its introductory chapter, "Apologia," written by Albert H. Good, is today considered to be the "definitive statement" on rustic or non-intrusive architecture as practiced by the National Park Service prior to World War II.<sup>7</sup> A talented group of NPS architects and landscape architects contributed to the book, including Vint, Good, Norman T. Newton, and Herbert Maier. The five bridges built in 1934

and all other structures built in Rock Creek Park before 1941 embodied the design philosophy of this seminal volume.

The new direction in the design of Rock Creek Park's structures was previewed by Service landscape architect Malcolm Kirkpatrick. In June, 1934, Kirkpatrick prepared a 16-page report on the reservation titled "What's Wrong with Rock Creek Park" as a supplement to the 1918 Olmsted plan. The document recorded a withering critique of the previous management of the natural resources of the park. He also declared the existing rustic designs of park structures and signs to be offensive and found the bridges to be of "bad architectural and structural design."<sup>8</sup> Kirkpatrick probably held to the Branch of Plans and Designs design philosophy expressed in Park Structures and Facilities (1935):

That the so-called "rustic" style offers, if anything more pitfalls to failure than do the more sophisticated expressions, is not widely enough understood. And while generally speaking it lends itself to many semi-wilderness regions perhaps better than others, its use is by no means appropriate to all park areas. This is instantly demonstrated by recalling the wide range of dominant characteristics of our parks. Spectacular snow-covered mountain peaks, dramatic primeval forests, open expanses of arid desert or limitless prairie, shifting sand dunes, gently rolling woodland and meadow, semi-tropical hammock, are not to be served appropriately by a single structural expression. A range of architectural styles as varied in their backgrounds must be employed before our park architecture will come of age.<sup>9</sup>

All of the bridges designed by the Branch of Plans and Designs were intended to be compatible modern additions to Rock Creek Park. Each structure incorporated a bold concrete span with randomly coursed stone abutments, piers, and wing walls. The structures, varied in dimension and the treatment of the chamfered wooden, concrete or iron railings, created a distinct pattern of bridge construction without direct design repetition. The clean lines of the modern rustic structures recognized Rock Creek Park's emergence in 1934 as a metropolitan park.

Another significant modern rustic addition to the reservation was a new Park Police Lodge built in 1935-36. Before this time a small frame "gingerbread" building was situated in 1919 at the junction of Military Road and Beach Drive and served as a police station.<sup>10</sup> The new building replaced this structure and was built just south of Joyce Road. The lodge was designed

by the Eastern Division of the Branch of Plans and Designs and reflected the same design philosophy employed on the foot and bridle path bridges in this period. The building was constructed in 1935 and a wing was added to the south elevation by the CCC for use as a comfort station in the following year.<sup>11</sup>

The substation is a one and one-half story building with flanking one-story subsidiary wings. Its style of architecture is eclectic, combining Rustic and classical form and details. This design combination was considered well-suited to Rock Creek Park. Randomly laid native stone walls, the grey slate roof, and earth toned wood finishes were selected to blend the building into its environment. The simple classical finishes, such as the cornice, dormers, shutters, and multipane window design, lend an understated Georgian sophistication to the building. The design set it apart from the more rugged Rustic style log and stone structures built by the National Park Service in the western wilderness parks in this period. In this respect the architects also recognized the design precedents set in the park by the Pierce family buildings. Their thematic approach toward the architecture of park buildings was outlined in the design guide Park Facilities and Structures (1935), which stated, "structures necessary in a park are naturally less obtrusive if they are reasonably unified by a use of one style of architecture, limited construction methods, and not too great variety in materials."<sup>12</sup>

This publication also urged the implementation of national park plans, stating that any "individual building or facility must bow deferentially before the broader park plan."<sup>13</sup> During the 1920s Vint and his staff developed master plans for most of the national parks. These plans were implemented during the Depression era. In the case of Rock Creek Park the master plan was contained in the 1918 Olmsted Report. The principles and concepts promulgated in the NPS park structures design guidebook clearly echoed the Olmsteds' planning philosophy. This was not surprising given the seminal influence of Frederick Law Olmsted, his sons Frederick and John, and their associates on the genesis of the landscape architecture profession and on the preservation and management of America's state and national parks.<sup>14</sup>

The stylistic influence of the Pierce family buildings may have been strengthened by the fact that these structures were restored by PWA grant projects in 1935-36. The most extensive of these historic restorations was the Pierce Mill project. In August, 1934, a meeting was held between park

administrators and the architects and engineers of the Branch of Plans and Designs. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the restoration of Pierce Mill and to outline a "policy and procedure for the preparation of plans."<sup>15</sup> In an August 17 memorandum sent to NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer, Charles Peterson, then-chief of the Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Designs, summarized the meeting's proceedings:

It was the recommendation of those present that the Historical Division be called in to compile a bibliography of information on the physical history of the Mill. Because of the necessity of showing construction progress it was decided to draw a deadline as of October 15 for the research program. In the meantime an "inner committee" consisting of one architect and one engineer will keep abreast of the historical data brought to light, and by October 15 drawings will be well under way. It is possible that certain demolition and repair work can be completed before the final plans for the entire project are approved, thereby avoiding some of the difficulties that may come with winter weather.<sup>16</sup>

The "inner committee" assigned responsibility for the plans consisted of noted pioneer restoration architect Thomas T. Waterman and Malcolm Kirkpatrick. Preliminary research on the mill and a photographic survey of the property had previously been prepared by NPS historian Ruth E. Butler and junior landscape architect Albert S. Burns in the spring of 1934. Further historical data was collected and filed as part of the Historic American Building Survey. The restoration architects also utilized comparative photographic evidence from a HABS survey of the Muncaster grist mill in Maryland, which was destroyed by a fire in January, 1935.<sup>17</sup> In that month the National Park Service announced the proposed restoration of Pierce Mill. The press release stated "that unless Pierce Mill is restored now, its identity will be lost and its preservation seriously jeopardized." It was also noted that "extreme care has been taken to make it a true copy of the original mill."<sup>18</sup>

By June 6, 1935, the restoration work had completed almost all necessary structural repairs. Thomas T. Waterman, the project's superintendent, described the heavy work in the first paragraph of a June progress report:

The repair of the mill building is fairly complete. The exterior stone walls have been repointed where necessary, the chimney flue repaired and a new stack built on the lines of the old. Various

apertures made in the stonework of the basement wall, when the turbine was installed have been stopped up, and the openings made under the windows above for the introduction of doors to the porch have been reconstructed and the porch and porch piers removed. The West second story window has been reopened. The cement window stools have all been removed and stone ones rebuilt. The steps to the South door have yet to be built.<sup>19</sup>

The architect also explained the progress on the replacement of new window frames and sash, the installation of a new hand split cedar shingle roof, and the construction of an enclosed stair from the first to the second floor. Waterman also noted that the construction of the mill race was near completion.<sup>20</sup>

In June, 1935, the Fitz Water Wheel Company of Hanover, Pennsylvania, was awarded a contract to restore the milling machinery for Pierce Mill. The specifications for the work had been prepared from preliminary plans prepared by the firm at a cost of \$500.<sup>21</sup> The specifications for the restoration of the milling machinery required that existing machinery in Pierce Mill be used, if practicable, and recommended the utilization of "original parts coming from mills of the same period and properly overhauled and put in first class working order whenever the furnishing of additional equipment is required; provided, however, that no parts shall be stripped from their historic mills for which projects for restoration are under consideration."<sup>22</sup>

The restoration of the mill race, wheel pit, and waterwheel proved to be the greatest challenge to the restoration team. Excavations on the race and wheelpit had to be completed before it could be determined that a new dam at a location further upstream on the creek would be essential to raising the elevation of the water to a height sufficient to power the wheel. Since the dam had not been calculated into the restoration estimate, a proposal for a timber dam (to be built at a location corresponding to that of the Shoemaker dam) costing \$8,500 was forwarded to the PWA in July, 1935. However, funds were not allocated for the project. Eventually an undershot wheel was installed that did not require a high elevation of water and ultimately the dam built in 1904 was repaired. Pierce Mill's restoration was completed and the building was opened to the public in 1936.<sup>23</sup>

This compromise on Pierce Mill's restoration may have been influenced by the sensitivity on the part of Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to

criticism in the press concerning the expense of the project, which eventually totaled \$26, 614.60. Ickes was accused of wasting federal monies on a pet project that would produce "the most expensive flour, perhaps, ever ground in history."<sup>24</sup> He was disturbed by the cost of the restoration as well as the legal implications of allowing the tea house concessionaire, the Welfare and Recreation Association of the Public Buildings and Grounds, to continue its use of the mill and to produce cornmeal in "fancy packages." He later reconsidered his approval of the project in a January, 1937, memorandum to Acting NPS Director A. E. Demaray:

I recall distinctly that it was I who first suggested the restoration of the mill, but I never expected it to be operated and I did not know that it was going to be operated. Why such an important policy should have been decided without reference to me is beyond my understanding, and yet the file shows that such authority was given by Director Cammerer. Here was a policy evolved over a course of months without the matter being brought to my attention by way of memorandum of information. This is just another instance of my learning of Interior Department activities through the daily press.<sup>25</sup>

The legal issues concerning the operating agreement were ultimately resolved because the Welfare and Recreation Association continued to produce cornmeal under the supervision of miller Robert A. Little. For the next twenty years the mill operated on a sporadic basis because of frequent problems with machinery breakdowns, fluctuations in water supply, and the difficulty encountered by the Service in finding an experienced millwright to maintain the machinery. By 1958 the milling apparatus no longer functioned. In the late 1960s interest in running the mill machinery resurfaced and the waterwheel, which was badly deteriorated, was replaced. An overshot wheel was installed because it was considered to have greater historical authenticity and the gears were adjusted to the directional change. A steady water course was created by means of a short exposed race supplied by city mains, and the mill was put back in operation in the early 1970s. Storm damage to the mill wheel in 1975 necessitated further repair and since that time the milling machinery has seldom been operated. The restored 1935 mill race-way, which was stone-lined and extended about 300 feet from the bend in the creek above Pierce Mill, was infilled in the 1970s.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the major restoration of Pierce Mill, the adjacent historic carriage and spring houses were repaired. In 1971 the carriage house was adapted for use as the Art Barn, a function it retains today. The Pierce Mill grounds were also extensively graded and new trees, shrubs, and vines were planted in this period. The bridle paths were reconfigured in the vicinity of the mill and an underpass was built for riders under Pierce Mill bridge, thereby eliminating a dangerous crossing on Tilden Street. An old spur road that connected the Pierce Mill complex to Broad Branch Road was obliterated and a new parking lot was built at this time.<sup>27</sup>

Another historic preservation project undertaken by the National Park Service in the 1930s was the restoration of the Pierce-Klinge mansion. The work was not extensive because the house had been maintained as a residence since its acquisition by the federal government. The walls and door and window surrounds needed repair and were patched with stone taken from a retaining wall behind the house. This wall had once been part of a glass greenhouse structure built below the twin dependencies which linked the potting and utility sheds. The interior of the house had lost decorative features, such as mantles and plaster moldings, but was in large measure intact. Temporary partitions were removed and the interior rooms were cleaned and painted. In addition, new wallpaper, patterned after historic coverings from the 1830s, was hung in the drawing and living rooms.<sup>28</sup> An early fireplace was uncovered in the basement and rebuilt, but this was the only notable new construction beyond stabilization and repair. The dependencies were also restored and a new wooden garage was built on the banked stone walls of a nineteenth century carriage house.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the restoration of buildings, the grounds of the Pierce-Klinge mansion were refurbished in the 1930s. National Capital Parks superintendent C. Marshall Finnian believed that it was essential that the grounds be landscaped because of Joshua Pierce's significance as a noted American horticulturalist. Finnian may have had an ulterior motive beyond interpretative educational values because he planned to live in the house after its restoration. The grounds of the house were laid out in a manner of house and garden landscape architecture of the period 1890-1930 and were not based on historic research. Apparently, it was the spirit of the historic association that was intended and not an accurate landscape restoration. The central component of the design was the creation of a southern vista from the

center hall extending across the terrace and encompassing the garden below. Although in need of structural repair and restoration of plant material, the overall design of the grounds, the circulation system, and construction features, such as walks and steps, remain intact [See illustration].<sup>30</sup>

Finnan eventually obtained the house as his residence and lived at the Pierce-Klinge mansion with his family from October, 1936, to August, 1939, when he was transferred to the post of superintendent of Zion National Park in southwestern Utah. The house was subsequently rented to an Interior Department official until 1952. A few years passed and the building experienced limited use by park staff. It was later reopened as the Rock Creek Nature Center in October, 1956. In 1960 a new nature center opened on the interior of the park, located east of the upper section of Glover Road. After this time the Pierce-Klinge mansion has been leased to non-profit organizations on two occasions and during the 1970s was used for administrative offices and as a center for the horticultural outreach program, the "Green Scene."<sup>31</sup>

The only significant addition to Rock Creek in the 1930s that was constructed without Depression-era relief monies was a memorial to French Ambassador Jules Jean Jusserand. This memorial bench was designed by New York architect Joseph Freedlander and was constructed of Milford pink granite. The bench was designed and built on an embankment overlooking Beach Drive approximately one-quarter mile south of Pierce Mill. The movement to erect a memorial to honor Jusserand was initiated by the prominent New York architect Cass Gilbert. Gilbert was instrumental to the 1933 organization of a memorial committee, composed of prominent statesmen, such as General John J. "Blackjack" Pershing, Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, former Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, and former senator and Secretary of State Elihu Root.<sup>32</sup>

Gilbert had been president of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) during 1908 and 1909 and was a member of the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts between 1910 and 1916. In this period he was a staunch advocate of the revival of the L'Enfant plan and the implementation of the 1901-1902 McMillan plan for Washington. Jusserand had supported these causes and on several occasions attended AIA dinners and exhibits held to publicize the Institute's goals. He also was a keynote speaker at the AIA's memorial service to honor French engineer and architect Pierre Charles L'Enfant in 1911 after reinterment of his remains at the present gravesite in Arlington Cemetery.<sup>33</sup>

The erection of memorial tribute to Jusserand was probably destined because the French ambassador was a greatly admired figure in the United States. He was a friend of five American presidents and a highly repected statesman. Jusserand also made longstanding contributions to diplomatic relations between his nation and the United States. His tact, intelligence, and understanding of the American people was particularly significant during the tense early years of World War I before the United States joined the Allies in the conflict. He was the recipient of numerous awards and honors from American universities and art and literary organizations. Jusserand also won a Pulitzer Prize in 1916 for a book on American history titled With Americans Past and Present.<sup>34</sup>

Shortly after the ambassador's death in 1933, Gilbert visited Madame Elise Richards Jusserand in Paris to discuss the memorial proposal. On his return to New York he wrote to Charles Moore, then-chairman of the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts, to discuss a location in Washington for the memorial and to ascertain whether an act of Congress would be required to build it. Gilbert's August, 1933, letter stated the following:

I told Madame Jusserand of my conversation with you on the subject, and I expressed a preference for a site in some quiet spot in Rock Creek Park not too conspicuous, not too far from the Creek, and reasonably accessible. I recall that as you and I drove through the Park there was just such a location down in the valley with a modest amount of open space in front of it and the hill rising behind it.<sup>35</sup>

Gilbert subsequently prepared preliminary sketches of a memorial in the form of a Greek stele and sent them to Moore. The commission chairman thought the design was a "little funereal" and later related to Gilbert's son that the "form had so recently been used in Arlington for the Taft memorial that I was fearful lest the Jusserand would seem a gravestone out of place."<sup>36</sup>

At Gilbert's suggestion William Mitchell Kendall, a principal member of the renowned New York firm of McKim, Mead and White, was asked by the committee to prepare a design. Kendall produced several sketches for the memorial to be built in a sunken garden to be located along the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. On June 17, 1935, Congress enacted a bill authorizing the erection of the Jusserand Memorial in a "simple and artistic form" on public land in Washington, exclusive of the U. S. Capitol and Executive

Mansion grounds.<sup>37</sup> The memorial committee considered Kendall's designs to be too elaborate and expensive. Subsequently, Joseph Freedlander was commissioned to plan a memorial. His design was eventually approved by the Commission of Fine Arts and built in Rock Creek Park.<sup>38</sup> The memorial bench was placed in Rock Creek Park and was described by Moore as a "happy incident in a rural setting." However, former park custodian Colonel U. S. Grant III did not share this view and strenuously objected to the erection of "artificial memorials" in Rock Creek Park on the grounds it would set a dangerous precedent.<sup>39</sup> Apparently, the site chosen by Gilbert and Moore in their 1933 ride in Rock Creek Park was selected and was considered an ideal place for a memorial because of Jusserand's well-known regard for the park. President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered an address at the ceremony formally dedicating the memorial on November 17, 1936.<sup>40</sup>

While bridges and restored historic buildings were the most conspicuous legacy of the New Deal era programs, Rock Creek Park's roads, trails, and creek banks were also busy sites of PWA and CCC projects. During the 1930s 7, 516 square yards of roadway was resurfaced, providing years of work for numerous unemployed males in the District of Columbia.<sup>41</sup> In a report filed on May 28, 1934, concerning the progress of the two-year PWA construction project on the Piney Branch Parkway, it was noted that a daily average of 136 laborers and 3 stone masons were at work constructing the road and its retaining walls.<sup>42</sup> The CCC made significant contributions to the infrastructure and recreational facilities of the park. The Corps were put to work riprapping the creek, planting trees and shrubs, building two-miles of equestrian trails and jumps, and obliterating abandoned roads and trails. These young men also demolished the Brightwood Reservoir (1900) and were detailed to construct tennis courts and ballfields in the vicinity of Sixteenth and Kennedy Streets in 1937.<sup>43</sup>

The available maintenance work in Rock Creek Park was sufficient justification to establish a CCC camp on the site of Camp Goodwill just north of Fort DeRussy in September, 1938. The camp, designated NP-14, was opened with a company strength of 154 enrollees. Housing and administrative accomodations were provided by "portable" wooden buildings. The enrollee's camp routine included reveille at six in the morning, attendance at vocational classes or lectures delivered by prominent civic leaders, work detail, and drum and bugle corps practice in the early evening. A recreation hall and library

room were provided for reading or playing checkers, darts, card games, or bingo.<sup>44</sup> In 1942 the CCC program was terminated, and the camp site was occupied by the Army and renamed Camp King during World War II. No structural evidence of either camp is extant.

The 1930s was an important transitional decade in the history of Rock Creek Park. In addition to the major administrative changes and notable New Deal improvements, sports facilities expanded, and the park's tolerance of pollution, and the volume of automobile traffic began to break down. Congress anticipated that Rock Creek Park's primary recreational uses would be equestrian sports, carriage rides, picnicking, and walks. Throughout the park's history equestrian use has been popular and largely the pastime of affluent patrons. The increased popularity of motoring, the loss of stables surrounding the park due to suburban development, and later paving of equestrian trails for bicycle paths, reduced park areas suitable for horseback riding. The present Horse Center on Glover Road was built in 1957 to accommodate equestrian enthusiasts, but the sport's popularity is today far below what it had been at its peak in the early decades of the twentieth century. For example, more than 30,000 spectators attended horse riding events in 1927 at Rock Creek and West Potomac Parks.<sup>45</sup>

In 1896 the Brightwood Citizens Association lobbied Congress to open access to the park and to allow concerts and sporting activities. This neighborhood group actively pressed the park managers to establish sports facilities in the area of Sixteenth and Kennedy Streets. Playing fields and tennis courts were placed in this section of the park by 1918. The Olmsted master plan for Rock Creek Park recommended that a permanent "playfield" be established at this site. In 1937 the Brightwood Reservoir was demolished and infilled, and this leveled area provided space for the further expansion of sports facilities in the park. After World War I the national popularity of golf and tennis boomed. New facilities in Rock Creek Park for these sports reflected popular demand. A nine-hole golf course opened at the old Camp Goodwill site in 1923, and new clay tennis courts were built in the vicinity of Pierce Mill off Park Road in 1926. <sup>46</sup>

The threat of the pollution of Rock Creek had been one of the principle justifications for the creation of the park in 1890. By the 1920s the park's springs were no longer safe sources of potable drinking water and swimming holes had to be chlorinated. However, it was not until the 1930s

that the National Park Service prepared the first major study of the pollution and siltation threats to Rock Creek and advanced a plan to eliminate these sources of environmental degradation. It was a costly solution requiring the extensive upgrading of the existing sewer system and the construction of separate storm sewers to prevent overcharged intercepting sewers from dumping their contents into the creek. The siltation and land erosion caused by upstream development were also noted as having major adverse effects on the water quality and stability of Rock Creek. These problems remain today, even though sewers have been extensively repaired and modernized. In the 1960s dams were built upstream in Montgomery County, and grading and sediment controls have been adopted for the watershed. While these efforts to control the water quality have improved conditions, pollution remains a serious threat to the future of Rock Creek Park.<sup>47</sup>

The increasing volume of automobile traffic has also had a destructive impact on the character of Rock Creek Park. Although pleasure driving by carriage and later automobile was considered a prime recreational activity in the park, the opening of the reservation to commuter traffic has increasingly diminished leisurely scenic driving. The completion of a "motor" driveway from the north end of Rock Creek Park to the East-West highway in Maryland in 1932 and the opening of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway in 1936 created a commuter corridor in the park. The impediment of sharp curves and periodic high water levels, which closed the fords on the road in the National Zoological Park grounds, limited the speed and reliability of the route in the 1930s and 1940s. Highway advocates had anticipated the bottleneck and began lobbying for a tunnel link under the zoo as early as 1933. Park planners concerned with the impact of a traffic artery on the character of the park delayed the project. However, as part of the Mission 66 park improvement program commemorating the 50th anniversary of the National Park Service, a tunnel and road segment was built and opened under the zoo in 1966. The Service later regretted their support of this project because it greatly expanded commuter use of park roads. Today more than 10,000 cars daily utilize Beach Drive as a connecting route from Maryland into downtown Washington.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the tunnel project, highway proponents over the years have advocated construction of a highway through the Rock Creek Valley. In 1938 District Commissioner Melvin C. Hazen favored the construction of a

highway connection from the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway through the zoo grounds and Rock Creek Park to the East-West Highway in Maryland. Opponents stalled the project and World War II delayed serious consideration of Hazen's proposal. Yet, it reappeared with renewed vigor in a report presented by the Regional Highway Planning Commission in 1952. A four-lane highway arterial was proposed to connect U. S. Route 240 (now Interstate 270) in Maryland with the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. This planned route cut through the heavily forested western edge of Rock Creek Park. The National Park Service strenuously opposed the highway and, with the support of numerous civic and conservation groups, succeeded in a long struggle to block the project.<sup>49</sup>

The battle over the highway plans became especially heated during the 1950s when the growth of the Washington suburbs mushroomed and new road construction was considered the only viable solution to regional transportation demands. In 1966 the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments revived the proposal to cut a highway through the western edge of Rock Creek Park, but the National Park Service again opposed the measure. The advent of the planned construction of a rapid rail Metro system signaled a new approach to Washington's regional transit problems and has rendered the Rock Creek Park freeway proposal obsolete.<sup>50</sup>

#### Major Park Development and Land Use, 1942-Present

Within the last forty-seven years Rock Creek Park has acquired several new structures on the interior of the reservation and has experienced intense development in the Sixteenth and Kennedy Street area. The new additions were built to accommodate the expanding public demands for entertainment, interpretative, and recreation programs. A comparison of a 1933 map of Rock Creek's facilities to a contemporary one reveals that the reservation has retained a high degree of its historic integrity from this former period. For example, the roads indicated on the 1933 map have largely retained their designed alignments, width, and scenic character. Periodic reconstruction of roadbeds or resurfacing has occurred, and in the 1950s the alignment of several segments of Beach and Morrow Drives were altered. However, the National Park Service has consistently respected the natural beauty of the park in these road projects. Significant changes were limited to reconstruction

and regrading of the roadbed, modernization of intersections, and bridge replacement. All of these improvements aimed at smoothing dangerous curves and intersections. A major exception was the reconstruction of Military Road (1958), which has been developed into a four-lane freeway and no longer retains its historic integrity. As part of road improvement programs, a series of new bridges have been constructed, including the Klinge Road (1947), Broad Branch (1957), Kalmia (1957), Milkhouse Ford (1957), and Sherrill Drive (1959) Bridges. These structures combine modern convenience with low, minimal unobtrusive design. They were built of concrete and steel and the piers and abutments are uniformly faced with gneiss stone.<sup>51</sup>

The system of trails indicated on park maps in the 1930s indicate that many paths have been reclaimed by the forest or reoriented. Rock Creek Park's trail system evolved from adaptive reuse of old roads and paths existing in the 1890s. With the passage of time, succeeding park managers have cut new trails and obliterated older paths to increase safety or modify the system. For example, the present equestrian trails were extensively reconfigured in the 1950s. However, equestrian and hiking paths, which were extant before 1941, have been maintained and incorporated into the modern trail system. These segments document the long historic tradition of these recreational activities in the park. A major non-historic addition to the trail system of the park was the paving of bicycle routes in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>52</sup>

In the modern period, recreational and administrative uses of Rock Creek Park have been most intensive to the south of Military Road. The land area north of this highway, which bisects the park, has experienced few changes since World War II. Camp King, the short-lived Army facility which replaced the CCC camp, was removed from the park in 1945. The Park Police Stables (1954) were built in this area and then renovated after fire damaged the building in 1980, but the disturbance is minimal. Although the realignment of Military Road encroached on the site, the golf course has remained in the same location since its completion in the 1920s. A new clubhouse (1968) and modern utility sheds were built to replace the old farmhouse and barn adapted for its operations.

South of Military Road the development of the park has been far more intensive. The area on the eastern edge of Rock Creek bordering Sixteenth Street between Kennedy Street and Bladgen Avenue experienced the most intrusive development in the park. The Sixteenth and Kennedy Street

recreation area was the location of the Brightwood Reservoir (1900), the first major intrusion in Rock Creek Park. This land area was developed for temporary accomodation of active sports activities as early as 1916. After the demolition of the reservoir in 1937, this section of the reservation was accepted for intensive development as a recreational facility. This planned use has culminated in the construction of numerous tennis courts, athletic fields, and the Rock Creek Tennis Stadium in 1987-88.

To the south of the Sixteenth and Kennedy Street recreational area, the Carter-Barron Amphitheater was built in 1950. Constructed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Washington as the seat of federal government, the outdoor theater and its adjacent parking lot have been a significant incursion on the park. The theater was named in honor of the vice chairman of the National Capital Sesquicentennial Commission, Carter T. Barron, after his sudden death shortly before the facility opened on August, 1950. The first production was a patriotic drama, "Faith of Our Fathers," commissioned for the sesquicentennial, which ran for two years. Throughout the next two decades a summer program of Broadway musicals, ballet, opera, and symphony engagements were provided for the public's entertainment. The riots of 1968 drastically curtailed white patronage of the theater and by the 1970s, Carter-Barron had evolved into a concert stage, largely patronized by black teenagers. Carter Barron's original audience has not been revived because of the dispersal of and competition from cultural programs at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and new outdoor summer entertainment provided by the Meriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia, Maryland and Wolf Trap Farm Park in Vienna, Virginia. Carter-Barron theater's decline has not been reversed and its future is uncertain.<sup>53</sup>

The remaining areas of modern development in Rock Creek Park are localized into a complex south of Military Road and east of Glover Road. In this area are the Horse Center (1957), Maintenance Yard and Park Administrative Offices (1958), and the Nature Center and Planetarium (1960). Most of these structures are low-lying utilitarian buildings constructed of cinderblock, wood, and steel. The Horse Center includes an L-plan barn and office complex built of cinderblock and finished with vertical wood siding. A corrugated steel warehouse-like building houses an indoor riding facility nearby just to the northeast of the main complex.

The maintenance yard and park offices are located directly south of the Horse Center. The one-story office, utility, and equipment building complex forms a rough square plan with an interior courtyard. Both the stables and administration/maintenance complexes are screened from Glover Road with trees and painted ochre or brown to mitigate visual intrusion. The Nature Center building is more pronounced and has the most distinctive architectural design of the group. Integrated into the landscape the two-story building is banked into a hill and was built on the site of the park foreman's residence. The 1935 frame building was altered and incorporated into the new structure. The center's low overall mass, flat roof, and cantilevered porch appear to be derived from International style domestic architectural models. The center was clad with irregularly coursed ashlar stone and dark wood paneling. In its architectural effect, the building is an updated version of the modern rustic design aesthetic introduced into the park by the National Park Service in the 1930s.

The most remarkable attribute of modern Rock Creek Park remains the landscape itself. Events and historic associations, related to past land uses and activities, are embodied in the park's structures, its spatial organization of recreational facilities, and its circulation pattern. However, it was natural scenic beauty that shaped the history of the park, inspired its conservation as a public landscape, and remains central to its significance. In 1890 Rock Creek Park was a remote public reservation largely unknown to the city's residents. Today it is renowned and taken for granted. In the future its preservation may depend on the public's understanding of both its natural and historic value. The boundaries of the reservation are surrounded by intensive urban development, which if left unchecked, will seriously damage the park. Rock Creek Park cannot be insulated from the pollution, traffic and congestion of the surrounding environment. Public demands for recreational facilities, new transportation routes, and adjoining development are bound to increase in the years ahead, but the urban pressures on Rock Creek Park must be tempered. The foreword to the 1918 Olmsted Report provided a guide for the solution of this dilemma:

Its [Rock Creek Park] preservation differs radically from the protection of any unchanging thing of beauty in a museum in that it involves an unending watchful struggle to neutralize destructive forces inevitably acting on the scenery; to reinforce

and supplement its natural powers of resistance and recuperation; and patiently, skilfully, and humbly to restore actual deterioration. The scenery of the Park cannot remain absolutely static; it is always changing for the better or worse, in many respects it has been deteriorating. The great problem of its management is to convert progressive deterioration into progressive restoration.<sup>54</sup>

"Progressive restoration" will require sensitive planning, liberal funding, and widespread public commitment to the conservation of the park's natural and historic resources. However, its reward would be another century of the public's enjoyment of a marvel of natural beauty.

## CHAPTER VI

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Barry Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History (Washington: National Park Service, 1985), pp. 70-71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>August 23, 1933, Storm Damage. Annual Reports, D. C. Administration and Personnel, Superintendents. RG 79. National Park Service, Central Classified Files, National Capital Parks, 207-001, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C. [Hereinafter abbreviated as NARA].

<sup>4</sup>For an assessment of this influential period of NPS park design, see William C. Tweed, Laura E. Soulliere, and Henry G. Law, National Park Service Rustic Architecture: 1916-1942 (San Francisco: Western Regional Office, National Park Service, 1977), pp. 48-51. See also Raymond L. Freeman, "National Parks," in William H. Tishler, ed., American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places (Washington: The Preservation Press, 1989), pp. 172-175.

<sup>5</sup>Tweed, et. al., National Park Service Rustic Architecture, pp. 91-94.

<sup>6</sup>Albert H. Good, ed., Park Structures and Facilities (Washington: National Park Service, 1935), p. iii.

<sup>7</sup>Tweed, et. al., National Park Service Rustic Architecture, p. 94.

<sup>8</sup>As quoted in Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 74.

<sup>9</sup>Good, ed., Park Structures and Facilities, p. 4.

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<sup>10</sup>For a brief description of this 1919 structure, see Memorandum for Col. Ridley, July 25, 1919. Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. RG 42. Entry 303. NARA.

<sup>11</sup>The original plans for this building are on file at the Map and Drawing Room, National Park Service, National Capital Region Headquarters, 1100 Ohio Drive, Washington, D. C. Microfilm #55-3-1. See also Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 108-109.

<sup>12</sup>Good, ed., Park Structures and Facilities, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>For brief career sketches of the Olmsteds and their significant associates, Calvert Vaux, Charles Eliot, Warren H. Manning, and Henry Vincent Hubbard and the influence of the firm on the landscape planning, national forest and national and state park programs, see Tishler, ed., American Landscape Architecture, pp. 34-69 and 157-199.

<sup>15</sup>Charles E. Peterson, Memorandum for the Director, August 17, 1934. File 620, Pierce Mill. RG 79. Records of the Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design, Records of the National Park Service, NARA.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Charles E. Peterson, Memorandum for Mr. Finn, March 31, 1934, and Memorandum for Mr. Cammerer, January 17, 1935. File 620, Pierce Mill. RG 79. Records of the Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design, Records of the National Park Service, NARA. See also HABS File DC-9, Pierce Mill, Rock Creek Park, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

<sup>18</sup>NPS Press Release, January 25, 1935. File 620, Pierce Mill. RG 79. Records of the Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design, Records of the National Park Service, NARA.

<sup>19</sup>Thomas T. Waterman, Report on the Status of the Work at Pierce Mill, June 6, 1935. File 620, Pierce Mill. RG 79. Records of the Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design, Records of the National Park Service, NARA.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 106.

<sup>22</sup>Specifications for Restoring the Milling Machinery in Old Pierce Mill in Rock Creek Park, Washington, D. C., June 5, 1935. File 620, Pierce Mill. RG 79. Records of the Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design, National Park Service, NARA.

<sup>23</sup>An explanation of the request for additional monies for the dam accompanied a prioritized list of public works projects in the National Capital Parks. See R. O. Jennings [Acting Associate Director, NPS] to Harold L. Ickes [Secretary of the Interior and Public Works Director], September 3, 1935. File # 618, Central Classified Files, RG 79. National Park Service, NARA. See also Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 106.

<sup>24</sup>Undated UPI newsclipping [Stamp dated February 26, 1936], "Ickes Puts \$19,200 in Old Mill with Nothing to Grind but 'Ifs' ." File 620, Pierce Mill. RG 79. Records of the Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design, Records of the National Park Service, NARA. See also Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 106.

<sup>25</sup>Harold L. Ickes, Memorandum for Acting Director Demaray, January 19, 1937. File 620, Pierce Mill. RG 79. Records of the Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design, National Park Service, NARA.

<sup>26</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 106-107; and see also Blaine E. Cliver, "Historic Structures Report, Pierce Mill-Water Wheel," History Division, National Park Service, 1967. Copy on File at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>27</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 107-108. This project was described in the Public Works project proposals sent by Jennings to Ickes, September 3, 1935. File # 618, Central Classified Files, RG 79. National Park Service, NARA. The executed plans are on file at the Map and Drawing Room, National Park Service, National Capital Region Headquarters, 1100 Ohio Drive, Washington, D. C. Microfilm #55-3-36.

<sup>28</sup>HABS File, DC-11, Linnean Hall (Klingle House), Rock Creek Park, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.; and also Helen Dillon, "Pierce-Klingle Mansion," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, October 10, 1973. See also John Clagett Proctor, "Old Nurseries Gained Fame," Evening Star (Washington), May 16, 1937; and Anne Sudyam, "100 Hundred Year Old House Reborn in District," Evening Star (Washington), December 2, 1938.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., see also Pierce-Klingle House File, Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>30</sup>C. Marshall Finnian to Director NPS [Cammerer], May 25, 1934. File 620, Pierce Mill. RG 79. Records of the Branch of Engineering and Branch of Plans and Design, Records of the National Park Service, NARA. The executed plans are on file at the Map and Drawing Room, National Park Service, National Capital Region Headquarters, 1100 Ohio Drive, Washington, D. C. Microfilm #55-2-73.

<sup>31</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 98-105.

<sup>32</sup>William Francklyn Paris, chairman of the Jusserand Memorial Committee, noted the "intiative in forming the Jusserand Memorial

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Committee was entirely that of Cass Gilbert..." in a letter to Charles Moore, June 28, 1934. Jean Jules Jusserand Memorial, Project Files, RG 66. U. S. Commission of Fine Arts, NARA. (Hereinafter references to this file will be abbreviated as Jusserand Memorial Project File, RG 66. NARA).

**33**For a descriptive and documentary record of Gilbert and Jusserand's contributions to the AIA's goals in this period, see Glenn Brown, Memories, 1860-1930: The Winning Crusade to Revive George Washington's Vision of a National Capital (Washington: W. F. Roberts, 1931), pp. 437, 520, and 568-579.

**34**For biographical sketch of Jusserand, see Sue A. Kohler and Jeffrey Carson, Sixteenth Street Architecture, Vol. 2, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1989), pp. 441-442.

**35**Cass Gilbert to Charles Moore, August 30, 1933. Jusserand Memorial Project File, RG 66. NARA.

**36**Charles Moore to Cass Gilbert, Jr., November 22, 1934. Jusserand Memorial Project File, RG 66. NARA. The elder Cass Gilbert died in 1934 and his son was appointed as his replacement as secretary of the Jusserand Memorial committee.

**37**Public Resolution-No. 30-74th Congress, H. J. Res. 204, June 17, 1935.

**38**Moore's letter to Abram Garfield, October 9, 1936, summarizes the development of the designs. Jusserand Memorial Project File, RG 66. NARA. This project file also contains correspondence with the two architects and blueprint copies of their preliminary sketches.

**39**Moore describes the memorial design in this manner in a letter to W. Francklyn Paris, May 2, 1936. The complaint is registered in the letter of Colonel U. S. Grant III to Moore, March 30, 1936. Jusserand Memorial Project File, RG 66. NARA.

**40**For newsclippings and pamphlets related to the dedication ceremony, see Jusserand Memorial Project File, RG 66. NARA.

**41**Peggy Roche, "Administration of Rock Creek Park Under the National Park Service," May 10, 1981, Unpublished Typscript. Copy on File at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

**42**See C. Marshall Finnian to A. E. Demaray, May 28, 1934. "Work on the National Capital Parks in the District of Columbia," Classified File #618. RG 79. Records of the National Park Service, NARA.

**43**Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, p. 108. See also Classified File #207-02.3. D. C. Monthly Reports, Superintendents, December, 1937. RG 79. Records of the National Park Service, NARA; and "C.C.C. Moves Soon to Rock Creek Park," Evening Star (Washington), April 15, 1938.

<sup>44</sup>Camp routine was summarized from inspection reports of NP-14 from 1940-1941. DCNP(D)-1, RG 35. Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps, NARA.

<sup>45</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 93-97. See also Annual Report of the Director of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1927), p. 39.

<sup>46</sup>See Chapter V for a discussion of the land use of the Brightwood Reservoir area before 1918. See also "Rock Creek Park: A Report by Olmsted Brothers, 1918." Copy on File at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

<sup>47</sup>For a discussion of the history of the pollution of Rock Creek Park and efforts to combat the problem, see Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 75-78.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 80-89.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>See chapter one of this report for a discussion the methodology employed to determine the historic integrity of roads and trails. For plans of the Beach and Morrow Drive reconstructions and bridges discussed above, see reels at the Map and Drawing Room, National Park Service, National Capital Region Headquarters, 1100 Ohio Drive, Washington, D. C. Microfilm #55-1-1, and 55-2-18.

<sup>52</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 89-97.

<sup>53</sup>Mackintosh, Rock Creek Park, pp. 113-115.

<sup>54</sup>"Rock Creek Park: A Report by the Olmsted Brothers, December, 1918," Unpublished typescript. Copy on file at the Rock Creek Park Nature Center, Washington, D. C.

## PART II

### Description and Evaluation of the Historic Resources of Rock Creek Park, District of Columbia.

The following properties are considered to possess architectural or historic significance that would contribute to a proposed Rock Creek Park Historic District. This proposed district is located in the northwest quadrant of Washington, D. C. and lies entirely within the District of Columbia. The 1754.62 acre parcel is legally defined as Reservation 339 and its boundaries are roughly defined as Sixteenth Street on the east, Oregon Avenue and Branch Road on the west, Klingle Road on the south and the District line and Parkside Drive on the north. The proposed district is a predominantly picturesque, forested valley with sloping hills and rolling meadows. The park is surrounded by commercial and residential development, but it has only two modern areas of concentrated recreational and administrative activity. These areas are located below Military Road in the vicinity of Sixteenth and Kennedy Streets and just east Glover Road on the park's interior. Otherwise, the proposed Rock Creek Park historic district retains a high degree of integrity that well reflects the historic development of this public landscape between 1791 and 1941.

The most conspicuous historic resources in the park are the nineteenth century stone residence and mill complexes built by the Pierce family. The Pierce-Klingle Mansion and Pierce Mill and their outbuildings have been considered historic sites from the acquisition of the park by the federal government. The influence of these solid vernacular buildings has been most evident in the use of native brown and grey stone as the appropriate material for subsequent park improvements. This building material has commonly been used for retaining walls, bridge abutments, and buildings throughout the park's history.

The circulation system of the park built and improved between 1830 and 1941 also contributes a distinctive layered historic character to the park. Many of the historic trails were adapted from old farm roads. The existing parkway road system was largely adapted from the reuse of existing county roads or originally built as early twentieth century park carriage drives. All

of the park's serpentine roads were designed for pleasure drives, which was a major recreational activity in the park before 1941. The present road system continues to reflect their original purpose of providing public vehicular access to the enjoyment of extraordinary rural scenery. Although adapted to the automobile, the designed alignment, width and environmental surroundings of these scenic roads has not substantially changed since the 1920s. The bridges of Rock Creek Park, such as Pierce Mill bridge (1872-1921), Boulder Bridge (1902), and Rapids Footbridge (1935), also clearly contribute to the historic development of the reservation. However, the most dominant physical characteristic of the district is the natural landscape itself. The exceptional natural beauty of this forested valley has determined or influenced historic events and associations in this historic district since intensive settlement in the region after 1790.

## INVENTORY

Approximately 170 structures and sites were surveyed and evaluated for this study. The following list of 31 contributing and 59 non-contributing above-ground resources are considered to be of sufficient size and scale to form the Rock Creek Park historic district resources inventory. Prehistoric and historic archeological sources were not considered. Vacant lots and open spaces have not been counted (i.e. parking lots, picnic areas, and ballfields), unless they possess significance under National Register criteria. A list of these minor non-contributing properties has been attached for reference purposes. Rock Creek Park-Real Property Inventory (RCP-RPI) number codes for a survey compiled in 1982 are used where possible to aid identifications.

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Summary

The Rock Creek Park historic district is architecturally and historically significant under National Register criteria A, B and C. The period of significance for the district spans the years 1791 to 1941. The first date was chosen on the basis of its historical associations with Andrew Ellicott's famous survey of the District of Columbia boundary. Rock Creek Park is the last major

parcel of natural landscape in the District of Columbia and represents a historic cultural resource associated with the historic Ellicott survey. The only other tangible cultural resources to recall this event are the D. C. Boundary Markers. Northwest Mile Marker No. 9 lies adjacent to the northwest corner of the park. It is known the survey team worked in the park because the D. C. line also formed the northwest boundary line for Reservation 339 set aside as Rock Creek Park in 1890. The latter year correlates to the end of the Depression era improvement programs in Rock Creek Park. Under the selected National Register criteria, the historic district has architectural and historic qualities and associations related to nine areas of significance listed and described below.

### **ARCHITECTURE**

Rock Creek Park historic district has two nineteenth-century building complexes (Pierce-Klinge Mansion and Pierce Mill), which have previously been listed individually in the National Register. This group of structures, built by the Pierce family, are recognized as important examples of early nineteenth-century stone vernacular construction in the District of Columbia. The Pierce Mill's architectural significance is further enhanced by its status as the only extant industrial building of its type in the city. The mill also has additional architectural importance because of its 1936 restoration by the National Park Service. The building was an early NPS historic preservation project in the District of Columbia directed by noted restoration architect Thomas T. Waterman.

In addition to the major historic complexes, Rock Creek Park also possesses the only known example of a late nineteenth-century Rustic style log building in Washington. The Miller cabin (1883-1912) was moved and reassembled in the park in 1911-12 as a tribute to the California poet Cincinnatus H. Miller who had built the structure off Sixteenth Street in 1883. The Park Police Substation (1935) also has architectural significance as an important reflection of the modern rustic design principles outlined in the influential NPS design sourcebook Park Structure and Facilities (1935).

### **COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

The historic district has strong associations with the planning history of Washington, D. C. Today the park is a vital reminder of the Pierre Charles L'Enfant's 1791 landscape plan to employ the surrounding forested hills of Washington as the frame for his formally designed city. In addition, Rock

Creek Park has important ties to the historical development of the national capital's park system beginning with Major Nathaniel Michler's 1867 land surveys. The subsequent history of the park's establishment documents the influence of the nineteenth century sanitary reform and park movements and the origins of the City Beautiful movement in Washington, D. C. The district was a central component of the now famous 1901-1902 McMillan Plan for the park system of the national capital. Furthermore, the preservation of the Rock Creek watershed contributed an important impetus for the creation of modern regional planning agencies, the National Capital Planning Commission and Maryland National Capital Planning Commission, in the 1920s.

### **CONSERVATION**

The establishment of Rock Creek Park was a significant event in the nineteenth century movement to preserve natural scenic areas in the United States. The park was created by Congress in 1890 along with the first post-Yellowstone (1872) national parks. The historic district does not approach the scale of its famous counterparts, the California wilderness preserves of Sequoia, General Grant, and Yosemite. However, it was a significant product of this nineteenth century conservation movement and helped pioneer scenic landscape preservation in the United States.

### **ENGINEERING**

Rock Creek Park has two bridges (Boulder and Ross Drive) previously listed individually for engineering significance. The 1907-1910 Sixteenth Street or "Tiger Bridge" lends further civil engineering importance to the historic district as the first parabolic arched bridge erected in the United States.

### **Entertainment/Recreation**

Rock Creek Park was established by Congress as a "pleasure ground" for the people of the United States in 1890. The creation of this open space for the enjoyment of the scenery, bicycle and horseback riding, strolls, picnics, and pleasure driving was considered a necessary antidote to urban growth. The district's historic roads and trails document the significance of these early leisure activities in the park. By the early 1920s the park accommodated more active recreational pursuits, including field sports, tennis and golf. Of the historic sites of these activities only the golf course retains sufficient integrity to recall this period of the park's recreational history.

## INDUSTRY

Within Rock Creek Park the Pierce Mill complex represents the sole surviving mill along a waterway, which once supported a thriving milling industry. Pierce Mill has been individually listed in the National Register for its significance to the region's industrial past.

## LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Rock Creek Park possesses significance as a historic natural landscape, which was adapted and significantly enhanced as a public park by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service between 1890 and 1941. The influential 1918 Olmsted report, prepared by acknowledged master landscape architects Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and John C. Olmsted, established methods of landscape practice and a general development plan for the park which has guided management of the reservation's natural resources to the present day. Implemented in 1919 the plan was a significant early application of park landscape planning and scenic preservation. The principles outlined in the report also influenced the design of historic park structures and land uses in the park. The historic district also contains a significant designed landscape in the style of the Country Place era. In 1936 the National Park Service's Branch of Plans and Designs prepared a garden plan to complement the recently restored Pierce-Klinge mansion. The design documents a significant effort to create a landscape to interpret and visually convey to the public the historic importance of the house's first occupant horticulturalist Joshua P. Klinge.

## MILITARY

Rock Creek Park includes a significant military structure which was once an integral component of the Union network of forts that encircled and defended the city from Confederate attack during the Civil War. Fort DeRussy has been individually listed in the National Register for its military significance as part of the Civil War Fort sites nomination listed on September 9, 1978.

## OTHER: HORTICULTURE

The Pierce-Klinge Mansion has been listed individually in the National Register under criterion B for its historical associations with the career of nationally renowned horticulturalist Joshua P. Klinge.

## **CONTRIBUTING**

### **Building Complexes**

#### **PIERCE-KLINGLE MANSION (HISTORIC NAME: LINNAEAN HILL).**

(1) **Site/ Designed Landscape**, (1823; ca. 1850; 1936).

Architect/Builder: National Park Service, Branch of Planning,  
National Capital Parks, 1936.

#### **Description**

The setting for the Pierce-Klingle mansion is a designed historic landscape that took its present design configuration in 1935-36 when the property was restored by the National Park Service. The present approximately two acre area was once part of an 82 acre estate developed along a U-shaped bend on Rock Creek. Joshua Pierce was a nurseryman who undoubtedly created a landscape setting commensurate to his 1823 house. The two-tiered garden terrace may have been part of an early formal garden design. The Boschke topographical survey maps of Washington, D. C. confirm that Pierce designed and built an extensive naturalistic landscape on his estate by 1856-1859. The map illustrates an intricate curvilinear road system, a large orchard on the northwest corner of the estate, and evidence of thinning and enhancement of the natural landscape.

Boschke also recorded eight buildings on the property. Three outbuildings, none of which are extant, were situated immediately northwest of the house. The twin dependencies to the rear of the house were delineated as pavilions linked by a massive retaining wall and greenhouse. The greenhouse was in ruins by 1907, and the wall was removed in 1935. The stone from the retaining wall was used in the restoration of the Pierce-Klingle house. South of the mansion were a springhouse and barn situated along the south side of a private drive cutting through the southern half of the estate. In the southwest corner of the property, northeast of what today is the intersection of Williamsburg Lane and Porter Street, was another sizeable outbuilding which may have been a gatehouse.

In 1867 General Nathaniel Michler completed a topographical map of northwest Washington to accompany his now famous survey report for the location of a public park and a site for the Executive mansion. This map is a detailed record of the appearance of the grounds of the Pierce-Klingle estate in

1866. The outline and site configuration of the extant house, paired dependencies, and carriage house/garage were essentially as they appear today. Five additional outbuildings, which are no longer extant, were also illustrated on the map. Of these buildings only two had not been recorded by Boschke and may have been additions after 1859. The first new building was a large structure directly southwest of the extant carriage house/garage and possibly was a stable or another greenhouse. A second and larger building was also constructed directly north of the barn. These structures faced each other and flanked the curving roadway which ran across the southern half of the property.

The Michler map also depicted a network of drives and walks, lawns, and prominent plant material in greater detail than Boschke's antebellum maps. Vehicular access to the property was gained from Joshua Pierce's Road [later designated Klingle Road], which skirted the southern boundary of the estate. This road crossed Klingle Ford just north of what today is the National Zoological Park and connected with Pierce Mill (Park) Road on the east. Two drives led north onto the Pierce estate from Klingle Ford Road. The western most road led due north past the estate to the Pierce Mill complex. Two tree-lined lanes were constructed off this road to the east. The northern most drive accessed the house and a southern lane led back to two large outbuildings flanking that roadway. A carriage drive on the east side of the estate led north off Klingle Ford Road then skirted east along a ridge overlooking Rock Creek and then curved north toward the main house. A fork in this roadway accessed a roadway connected to the stable and carriage house behind the house and to a lane leading out on a connection with Pierce Mill. It is known that Pierce had established a nursery and arboretum on his estate by 1857 and was selling plant specimens. It appears the drives were for pleasure rides through the property to examine the fruit and ornamental trees and shrubs on the grounds. The 1892 USGS topographical maps indicate that the property retained the general appearance recorded by Michler's survey team until the government acquired the 31 acres of the northern half the estate, which are now part of present day Rock Creek Park.

After creation of the park, the system of drives was no longer maintained. The northern paths and roads connecting the Pierce Klingle estate to Pierce Mill became bridle paths. Drives to the south of the new park boundary eventually were altered and reconfigured to accommodate an enclave

of late nineteenth and early twentieth century residences which abut the park today. By 1919 the double loop drive in front of the house had been replaced by a single oval roadway. The only vestige of the intricate system of drives built by Pierce that is extant is what is now an abandoned gravel road on the east side of the house.

In 1935-36 the Pierce-Klinge estate buildings were restored and the grounds refurbished. Grading plans for a new roadway onto the site records a garden landscape plan for the house. This plan closely correlates to the existing circulation system and structural character of the present landscaped setting for the Pierce-Klinge house. Although this designed landscape is now deteriorated, the Pierce-Klinge mansion grounds clearly reflect their 1936 design intent. The historic house site was planned to create a setting that recalled Joshua Pierce's profession as a horticulturalist. Although the landscape design was not based on historic research, it attempted to capture the spirit of the original setting. However, the reduction of land area, the rich planting scheme, and balanced character of the surrounding gardens reflects a design influence of house and garden landscape architecture of the period 1890-1930, rather than the mid-nineteenth century romantic villa grounds of Downing. A central element of this design was the creation of a southern vista from the center hall of the house leading out to a formal terrace and garden lawn below. The design transfers the balance and symmetry of the architecture of Linnaean Hill directly to the grounds. This vista and the original circulation system of gravel drives and stone walks remain intact. Although the walks are in need of repair and significant plant material has been lost, the terrace and semi-circular garden retain their distinct form and outline. The interpretive historic character of the grounds was enhanced by the retention of an 1850s carriage drive as a bridle path and adaptation of the remnants of old orchard for use as a corral. The design intent of this Depression-era landscape plan is intact.

#### Significance:

The designed landscape setting for the Pierce-Klinge Mansion is significant as an early expression of the National Park Service's interpretative historic preservation programs. The designed garden setting was employed to complement the house of horticulturalist Joshua Pierce and to evoke historic associations with the owner's occupation and use of the property as an arboretum.

(2) Pierce-Klinge House (1823; 1843; 1934-35). Listed individually in the National Register on October 10, 1973. [RCP-RPI 3450-7185]  
Architect/Builder: Pierce, Isaac, Abner, and Joshua.

Description:

The Pierce-Klinge House is located on a secluded landscaped hilltop site just off Williamsburg Lane above the west bank of Rock Creek about one-half mile south of Pierce Mill. The large stone farmhouse combines English-influenced Georgian and Pennsylvania German folk architectural traits in its form, plan, and architectural details. Like many Pennsylvania German residences the house is one-room deep and built into a bank and has a semi-subterrean cellar. The principal or north facade is two and one-half stories in height and the rear or south elevation, which incorporates the basement/cellar, has three floors and the attic. The original 1823 building had a symmetrical five-bay facade before the addition of a large projecting front gabled wing. A matching stone addition (one-story on the north facade and two-stories on the south elevation) with small pedimented gables on each side was added to the west of the original building in 1843. The central projecting addition has three round headed archs forming an enclosed porch to the main entrance. Without this projection the north elevation of the Pierce-Klinge House would appear as a traditional British I-house (one room depth and two-stories in height) type.

The Pierce-Klinge house has a side-gabled roof with a moderate pitch, which is finished with wood shingles. Interior end chimneys are flush to the walls and were built on both the core building and its subordinate wing. The house's cornice is shallow-molded and uniformly unadorned. Two symmetrically balanced pedimented roof dormers light the attic story of the principal facade. The building's two-feet thick fieldstone walls are laid in irregular courses with minimal decorative detail. Lintels, sills, and doors surrounds are large flat stones. The wooden frames are also simple, and the window sash is patterned in a six-over-six configuration throughout the building.

The rear/south facade of the 1823 core building is also five bays wide, but it does not include a projecting wing. The third floor of this facade has five unit window design symmetrically arranged in a standard manner for Georgian influenced architecture. The second floor on the rear has a central single door and paired windows to complete this level's five unit design. The door leads out onto a two-story decorative wrought iron veranda with stairs that lead down to

a garden terrace. The basement level has a window-door-window-door-window arrangement. Double doors are symmetrically placed on each half of the elevation. The 1843 side wing has a pedimented cornice and a large central window with a grapevine decorative wrought iron balcony. On the basement level there is a smaller six-over-six window flanking a single door entry. The west and east elevations present blank stone facades with the exception of the inclusion of square paired attic gable windows. A single door was also included on the west elevation at the basement level.

Significance:

The Pierce-Klinge Mansion was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 for its historic associations with prominent horticulturalist Joshua Pierce and for its architectural significance as an outstanding local example of nineteenth century vernacular stone construction.

(3) and (4) Pierce Klinge Utility House and Potting Shed, (1823). Listed as contributing buildings with the Pierce-Klinge Mansion in the National Register on October 10, 1973. [RCP-RPI 3450-7187 and 7188]

Description:

Directly south of the Pierce-Klinge house are two identical outbuildings. These dependencies are built into a terrace and probably once framed a formal vista. Each dependency is square in form and has a single cell plan. They are both capped by a wood-shingled pyramidal roof finished with a finial urn. The walls are laid in irregular coursed fieldstone and match the masonry of the main house. Design continuity with the core building is also evident in the care to continue the use of simple flat stone door and window surrounds, identical wooden frame and sash construction, and six-over-six lights. From the north elevation the dependencies appear to be one-story buildings. In fact, each building is two-stories and banked into the hill. A semi-subterrean first level is visible only from the lower garden. Entries are located on the east on the second or terrace level and on the western elevation of the lower grade.

Significance:

Listed in the National Register in 1973 as a contributing component of the Pierce-Klinge estate.

(5) Pierce Klingle Stable/Garage (1823;1936). Listed as contributing buildings with the Pierce-Klingle Mansion in the National Register on October 10,1973 [RCP-RPI 3450-7186]

Description:

Approximately 100 feet west of the main house is a stable/garage outbuilding constructed into the hill. The first level, which is banked into the terrain, is built of irregularly coursed fieldstone masonry that matches the main house and probably dates to 1823. The upper level of the building is vertical framed siding that was added to create the garage in 1937. The gable end roof is moderately pitched and covered with wood shingles. The fenestration is simple six-over-six wooden sash on the north and south elevation. The west facade has a barn door on the ground level with two simple square windows with six lights in the frame gable end. The east elevation contains a double-door garage entered on the second level.

Significance:

Listed in the National Register in 1973 as a contributing component of the Pierce-Klingle estate.

PIERCE MILL

The setting of Pierce Mill has been altered many times during the administrative history of Rock Creek Park. The mill site was enhanced in a "naturalesque" style in 1919 and was reconstructed to complement the historical restoration of the mill in 1936. The landscape has not retained distinctive features from either design periods. Trees have been cleared, roads, trails, and bridle paths have been changed or obliterated. New features, such as railings and stone walks have also been introduced. Finally, the mill race, which was the focal component of the 1936 landscape reconstruction of Pierce Mill has been infilled. Although the site could not be considered a significant designed historic landscape, it does retain its topography and sufficient plant material to recall its nineteenth century creek side setting.

(6) Pierce Mill Bridge, 1872; 1895; 1921.

Architect/Builder: Conway Blunt, D. C. Bridge Engineer (1895); D. C. Assistant Engineer of Bridges, (1921). [RCP-RPI 3450-7313]

Description:

Pierce Mill Bridge spans Rock Creek in the vicinity of the intersection of Beach Drive and Park Road, N.W. The structure connects Tilden Street with Park Road and is an integral east-west link for a city thoroughfare that crosses the narrow southern end of the park. The two lane vehicular bridge is of plate girder design and construction consisting of three simple spans totaling

an overall length of 178 feet and a width of 29 feet. Its steel girders rest on stone piers and concrete abutments faced with granite that were built in 1872 to support the original wooden superstructure.

In 1895 the D. C. Commissioners authorized bridge improvements that included installation of steel girders with a new wooden deck and railings. Between 1912 and 1914 the wooden railings that framed the east and west approaches to the bridge were replaced with irregularly coursed masonry wing walls. Further bridge improvements made in 1921 included construction of a new abutment on the east bank of Rock Creek and asphalt resurfacing of the deck. In that year a graded and filled roadway connection was built between the east wing walls and Park Road. The present tubular steel railings were also installed at this time. Although the bridge has periodically been resurfaced and the superstructure has been reinforced and repaired many times, the historic integrity of the bridge has been retained since its last major renovation in 1921.

Significance:

Pierce Mill Bridge is the oldest extant bridge in Rock Creek Park with strong associations with and reflecting the changes to the physical character of the Pierce Mill property between 1872 to 1921.

(7) Pierce Mill, (1829;1919;1936). Listed individually in the National Register, March 24, 1969. Architect/Builder: Pierce, Isaac and Abner. [RCP-RPI 3450-7170]

Description:

Pierce Mill is located on the west bank of Rock Creek at the foot of a gentle sloping hillside just north of the approach to the bridge connecting Tilden Street and Park Road N. W. The impressive vernacular stone building was constructed according to its date stone in 1829. Yet some writers claim that the date stone signifies a later addition to the building. Although modified in 1931 and heavily restored in 1936, the early nineteenth-century architectural character of the mill has remained intact. Milling operations ceased in 1897 and the property was used as a tea house concession and park offices before 1936. During the first decade of the twentieth-century, a turbine engine, which had replaced the waterwheel in 1878, was removed and the original mill race was infilled. In 1919 the building was repaired and in 1931 a one-story screened porch was added to the north facade. This enclosure was built up on stone piers in the area of the old mill wheel. Other exterior changes

were minor and included the removal of flower boxes and wooden shutters on the second level and replacement of two-over-two with six-over-six window sash.

In 1936 the National Park Service restored the mill. However, the exterior changes were again minor. The project repointed the stone walls and reconstructed holes cut in the north wall for the 1931 porch addition. Windows were also rebuilt and fitted with new frames and sash. All the sash installed in 1919 was replaced with a nine-over-six configuration except the gable end attic windows which retained six-over-six lights in 1936. The chimney flue was also repaired and a new brick stack erected which was based on the lines of the original. The major change to the exterior appearance of the building was the reconstruction of the waterwheel, and mill race (now infilled).

Pierce Mill was built into a hillside along Rock Creek with a northwest axis. Architecturally this industrial building resembled a large stone farmhouse combining Georgian and Pennsylvania German forms and construction details. The mill has gable-ends and a rectangular plan and is two rooms deep. The principal facade (west) is two-and-one-half stories and the rear elevation (east), which includes a semi-subterrean basement floor, is three-and-one-half stories. Pierce Mill is three bays wide, has ground floor center entrances on each elevation with the exception of the north facade, and the fenestration is formally arranged. The north facade has a wheel pit and waterwheel on the ground level. The gable end facades have paired symmetrical windows on each floor. The mill walls are brown and blue granite laid in irregular courses and all the sills and lintels are flat stones. The window openings have unadorned frames and are filled with nine-over-six sash except on the gable ends and the rear basement level. The attic level windows on the gables have a six-over-six configuration and the rear basement windows have wooden louvered screens. Side-hinged shutters are also included on the mill's fenestration.

#### Significance:

Pierce Mill was individually listed in the National Register in 1969 for its historical associations with the agricultural and commercial development of the Washington region in the nineteenth century. The building is the only extant grist mill in the city. The mill was also recognized for its architectural importance as an outstanding example of vernacular stone construction. Pierce Mill also has strong associations with the early historic

preservation programs of the National Park Service. The structure was restored by a park service team in 1935-1936, which included noted pioneer restoration architects Thomas T. Waterman and Charles Peterson.

(8) Pierce Mill Dam, (1904-1905). Architect/Builder: Strange, Otto. [RCP-RPI 3450-7515]

Description:

Pierce Mill Dam crosses Rock Creek at a point approximately 150 feet north of Pierce Mill bridge. The dam was constructed in 1904 by Otto Strange at a cost of \$4,000 after an earlier upstream wooden dam was washed out. It was built on a foundation of rock and is of concrete construction. The dam measures twelve feet above the foundation, and the height of the waterfall is approximately six and one-half feet. The structure is faced on the downstream side with boulders, and it is 100 feet long with a middle spillway of forty feet. Masonry wings were added to the dam in 1905. The structure was repaired and the boulders repointed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1936, but otherwise it has remained unaltered.

Significance:

Pierce Mill dam is historically significant for its associations with the early use by park visitors of the Pierce Mill area as a meeting place and picnic area. The sole purpose of the construction of the dam was to provide a rustic water feature, which would recall the mill's history and at the same time create a picturesque setting for the enjoyment of the grounds.

(9) Pierce Coach House [Art Barn], (ca. 1810; 1936). Listed individually in the National Register on October 25, 1973. Architect/Builder: Pierce, Isaac. [RCP-RPI 3450-7171]

Description:

The Pierce Coach House is located approximately 34 feet north of Tilden Street, N. W. directly across from Pierce Mill. The two-and-one-half vernacular stone barn has a rectangular ground plan and roughly measures 26 wide by 35 feet long. The barn has a front gable end facing south and this wall consists of vertical (above the second floor) and horizontal (ground floor) boards. The varying direction of this elevation's wooden wall is continued by large diagonally framed double doors supported by long iron hinges. A smaller cross braced side door is located on the southeast corner of the building. Deep set transoms are placed over the barn doors and entrance. The barn door

transoms are narrow and horizontal with three lights and the entry doors has a square window with six lights. Tripartite square six-light windows with bracketed tops are set into the attic gable over a second-story loft door.

The building's remaining walls are irregularly coursed blue granite stone. All door and window opening have simple flat stone lintels and sills. The east elevation of the barn faces toward Pierce Mill and has symmetrically paired six-over-six windows on the second level with side hinged wooden shutters. Two windows of a similar design and configuration are placed on the first level but are irregularly placed. The opening for the window toward the rear of the barn was originally larger and accommodated a door, but this space was infilled with the replacement window sometime before 1936. A brick chimney stack protrudes from the roof of this elevation. The west elevation has two centrally placed windows that light each floor. The north facade as a center gable window and two asymmetrical window openings placed to either side of a center axis. The barn was restored by the National Park Service in 1935-1936, and its exterior appearance has remained largely unaltered since that time. In 1971 the interior of the building was modernized for use as an art barn/gallery.

#### Significance:

The Pierce Coach House [Art Barn] was listed in the National Register for its historic associations with the nineteenth century farming and commercial activities of the Isaac Pierce plantation.

(10) Pierce Springhouse 1801; 1935. Listed individually in the National Register on October 25, 1973. Architect/Builder: Pierce, Isaac. [RCP-RPI 3450-7173].

#### Description:

The Pierce Springhouse is located in a triangular shaped hollow which is now part of a landscaped median strip between the dual lanes of Tilden Street, N. W. The four lane road converges into a two-lane approach to Pierce Mill Bridge. The one and one-half story gable end building has a rectangular ground plan approximately 15 wide and 19 feet long. The walls are blue granite stone laid in irregular courses. The roof is covered by wood shingles and has a medium pitch. A square brick chimney stack breaks the roofline on the western elevation. The fenestration and door openings have stone lintels and sills and unadorned framed surrounds. On the ground level of the main (south) facade a vertically paneled door provides access into the building.

Rectangular six-over-six windows with side hinged frame shutters are located on each gable end. A square window and a second door were located on the ground level of the east wall of the building. The springhouse was encircled with the addition of a horseshoe shaped dry laid granite wall with a side stepped entrance when the building was preserved within a highway median built in 1913.

Significance:

The Pierce Springhouse was listed in the National Register for its historic associations with the nineteenth century farming and commercial activities as a part of the Isaac Pierce plantation.

## BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES AND OBJECTS

(11) Joaquin Miller Cabin, (1883; moved 1912). Architect/Builder: Miller, Joaquin; California State Association. [RCP-RPI 3450-7132].

Description:

The Joaquin Miller Cabin is located at Picnic Area #6, approximately 75 feet west of Beach Drive and is approximately one-half mile north of Military Road, N. W. The one-and-one-half story building is sited at the north end of a large meadow-like picnic grove. The L-shaped cabin was built by noted American poet Joaquin Miller (1838-1913) in 1883 at a site near the intersection of 16th and Belmont Streets, N.W. across from what is now Meridian Hill Park. Historic photographs indicate that Miller erected his house on a log foundation with log walls tied together by double-saddle notching and concrete chinking. The gable ends of the building were finished with smaller vertical timbers and the steep pitched cross-gabled hipped roof was covered by shingles. All fenestration openings were trimmed with simple frame surrounds, sills, and lintels and filled with six-over-six window sash. A fieldstone fireplace was built at the center of the cabin, and the protruding stack section was common bond brick with a stepped decorative corbel.

In 1911-1912 the cabin was disassembled and moved to its present site and dedicated on June 2, 1912. Newspaper coverage of the building's move and reconstruction in Rock Creek Park indicate great care was taken in dismantling the building and replicating its appearance. Original building fabric was lost in the move, but Miller's cabin was reconstructed with a high degree of visual accuracy in terms of its design, materials, and workmanship.

The log cabin was rebuilt at its present site on a concrete foundation with its principal elevation facing south. Paired windows with six-over-six sash are on the first level of the north and south elevations and single six-over-six gable-end windows light the attic story. In addition, there is an identical single window on the stepped back wall of the main elevation of the L-shaped cabin. Historic photographs indicate this fenestration pattern appears identical to that built in 1883. The remaining openings are simple framed doorway entries on the east side of the cabin. These doors provide access to the two rooms in the building. An L-shaped flagstone walk creates an outside patio connection between the two doors.

**Significance:**

The Miller Cabin is historically significant as a 1912 memorial to the California poet, Cincinnatus H. Miller. The property also has strong historical associations with the recreational uses of Rock Creek Park serving as a shelter and museum to the "Poet of the Sierras." Architecturally the cabin is significant as an early preservation project and a rare extant rustic style log building in the District of Columbia.

(12) **Visitor Center/Park Police Substation [1935-1936].**

Architect/Builder: National Capital Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Design. [RCP-RPI 3450-7165]

**Description:**

The Park Police Substation is located approximately one-quarter of a mile south of Military Road, N. W. fifty feet east of Beach Drive. The symmetrical one-and-one half story Colonial Revival style building has a simple rectangular three-part plan of a center block and two subordinate wings. The center block has a large central ridged chimney and a slate gable roof with two balanced projecting clapboard sided hipped dormers. Each of the one-story wings also has a slate side gable roof. The building's walls are rough cut ashlar stone laid in irregular courses. Each of the door and window openings have segmental arches and the windows of the center block have decorative wooden shutters. Originally the north wing was used as a garage. The large arched span of the vehicle entry has since been infilled with wooden panels, a central door, and two flanking six-over-six windows. The fenestration of the projecting four-bay central block and roof dormers also has six-over-six sash. The south wing, designed as the comfort station, has a simple framed door opening abutting the central block. Two symmetrically

aligned six-over-six windows are placed on the gable end of this wing of the building.

Significance:

The Park Police station is architecturally significant as a National Park Service modern rustic style building. The structure clearly exhibited the service's architectural design philosophy in this period as expounded in Albert Good's influential book, Park Structures and Facilities (1935). Designed to be subordinate to the landscape, the rustic design employed native stone as a building material and earth tone wood colors to blend the modern facility into its environment.

(13) Jules J. Jusserand Memorial (1936). Architect/Builder: Joseph Freedlander. [RCP-RPI 3450-7530]

Description:

The Jusserand Memorial is located approximately one-quarter of a mile south of the Pierce Mill complex and is sited on a gentle sloping hill approximately twenty five feet east of Beach Drive. The memorial bench is carved out of Milford Pink granite in the form of an exedra and incorporates low relief carvings of wings at its ends. The elliptical bench is approximately 22 feet long and 4 feet high and rests on a stepped granite platform. On the backrest of the bench is inscribed: JUSSERAND, PERSONAL TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM AND AFFECTION, 1855-1932.

Significance:

The Jules Jusserand Memorial is historically significant as a commemorative monument reflecting the American public's appreciation of the French ambassador's contributions to Franco-American relations between 1903 and 1925.

(14) Fort DeRussy Earthworks (1861-1865). Listed in the National Register as part of Civil War Forts thematic nomination, 1985. Architect/Builder: 4th New York Heavy Artillery, U.S. Army. [RCP-RPI 3450-7516]

Description:

Fort DeRussy is located approximately one-half mile northeast of the intersection of Military Road and Oregon Avenue and can be accessed by foot/bridle trail. Originally the fort was a trapazoidal earthwork with a 190 yard perimeter. The fort's original armament contained "three 32 pdr. seacoast guns (*en barbette*), one 100-pdr. Parrot (*en barbette*), five 30 pdr.

Parrots (*en embrasure*), one 10-inch and one 24-pdr. Cochran mortar." The fort's earthworks were the nucleus of an 86 acre site complex cleared of trees consisting of "two barracks (lumber measuring 20' x 100'), two mess halls (lumber, 20 x 52'), five officers' quarters (log), two stables (log), an ordnance sargeants' quarters (lumber), and a guard house (log, 12' x 18')." All of the ordnance, buildings, and salvageable materials were removed from the site after a public sale on October 14, 1865. Today only the earthworks remain extant. They appear as a high mound-like form set in a heavily wooded area. The roughly trapazoidal earthworks retain their original dimensions. The earthen structure is surrounded by a moat-like trench, and its walls average a formidable 20 feet in height.

Significance:

Fort DeRussy is historically significant for its associations with the military fort defense system of Washington during the Civil War and specifically for its role in the Battle of Fort Stevens. Fort DeRussy kept Lieut. General Jubal A. Early's men at bay during the Confederate raid on Washington in July, 1864.

(15) Ross Drive Bridge, [1907; 1968], Listed in the National Register, 1979.  
Architect/Builder: Douglas, W. J. [RCP-RPI 3450-7320]

Description:

Ross Drive Bridge spans a deep ravine in Rock Creek Park located approximately one-half mile south of Joyce Road. This three-hinged reinforced concrete bridge has an overall length of 168 feet and is approximately 18 feet wide. The structure's general design consists of a central arch with a span of 100 feet and a rise of 15 feet with two approaches of 30 feet. The central span is composed of arch ribs carrying light spandrel columns at ten foot intervals. These spandrel columns, along with the independent columns of the approach fills, carry the concrete slab roadway, which originally was sixteen feet wide. The bridge was widened by the addition of extra roadway cantilvering in 1968, but the open spandrel arch design and structural integrity of the bridge were not effected by the changes. The only other notable alteration to the bridge was the infilling of troughs on the bridge walls. These troughs were originally designed as planting boxes for decorative vines.

**Significance:**

Ross Drive was listed in the National Register in 1980 for its engineering significance as one of the earliest triple hinge bridges in the United States.

(16) Grant Road Bridge, (ca. 1898) Architect/Builder: Unknown. [RCP-RPI 3450-7325].

**Description:**

The Grant Road Bridge spans Broad Branch at the intersection of Broad Branch Road and Grant Road on the southwestern edge of Rock Creek Park. The stone culvert has a single arch with a overall length of 10 feet and roadway width of 21 feet. The interior of the bridge's arch is brick faced with irregularly coursed granite. A keystone is located at the center of the arch ring on each side of the bridge. The structure is in good condition and recently all the masonry work was repointed.

**Significance:**

Grant Road Bridge is historically significant for its associations with Captain Lansing H. Beach's road improvements in Rock Creek Park between 1897 and 1901. The structure was either built or incorporated into the park's infrastructure at this time. The bridge may pre-date the park since stone culverts were commonly built on Washington's county roads in this period.

(17) Boulder Bridge, [1901-1902]. Architect/Builder: Douglas, W. J./ Talty and Allen. [RCP-RPI 3450-7309]

**Description:**

Boulder Bridge spans Rock Creek on Beach Drive approximately one and one-half miles south of Joyce Road. The structure is a Melan reinforced concrete and steel arch bridge with an arch ring and spandrel wall faced with worn boulders. The overall length of the bridge is 130 feet and the span of its segmental arch is 80 feet with a rise of 15 feet. The straight wing walls are 25 feet in length and rest on solid rock foundations averaging approximately 2 feet in depth. The arch stones average 3 feet in depth and from 16 to 18 inches in width. These large boulders are secured to the bridge's steel girder structural arch with wrought iron fastening clamps cemented into each stone. The bridges remaining facing and parapet walls are made up of boulders averaging 15 inches in width cemented in place with a mortar dressing, which has been scraped to minimize the appearance of artificial coursing. The facing stones were carefully chosen to recall the rocky character of the streambed in the

vicinity of the bridge and the cobbled effect of the facing and masonry creates a distinct rustic design.

Significance:

Boulder Bridge was listed in the National Register in 1980 for its architectural, engineering, and historical significance. The bridge is Washington's finest example of rustic bridge architecture. It is also a significant work of engineer as one of the earliest Melan reinforced concrete arch structures of its type built in the District. Historically the structure has importance as one of the first bridges erected in Rock Creek. It also has strong associations with Captain Lansing H. Beach's road construction program as one of his handpicked designs for the "Rock Creek" Drive.

(18) Pinehurst Bridge (1910-1911;1958) Architect/Builder: Baily, T. C. J. Engineer; E. G. Gummel, Contractor. [RCP-RPI 3450-7303].

Description:

The Pinehurst Bridge is a vehicular structure on Beach Drive that spans Pinehurst Branch three quarters of a mile south of Sherrill Drive. The bridge has a single full centered circular arched span of sixteen feet. The structure's overall length totals 41 feet and the arch barrel has a width of 24 feet. The concrete arch is finished with rubblestone and originally it had a rustic stone parapet and wing walls. In 1958 the bridge was widened and the deck was raised three feet and these features were removed. The superstructure of the recent section of the bridge consists of a corrugated steel multi-plate arch. This face or the west side of the bridge is finished with regularly cut and laid ashlar stone.

Significance:

The Pinehurst Bridge is historically significant as one of the few surviving permanent bridges erected under the direction of the Board of Control. Constructed in the rustic style, the bridge was built to accommodate automobile pleasure drives into the upper reaches of the park and in so doing played a significant role in opening this section of the reservation to the public.

(19) Sixteenth Street Bridge (1907-1910). Architect/Builder: District of Columbia Bridge Division/Pennsylvania Bridge and Cranford Paving Company. Sculptor: Proctor, Alexander P.

Description:

The Sixteenth Street Bridge spans the Piney Branch valley and provides a north-south arterial across this eastern arm of Rock Creek Park. The structure is a single span concrete parabolic arch with a vertical highway clearance of 25 feet. Two large parallel arches and a system of spandrels form a structural underpinning which supports the road bed. The concrete arches were poured in place and span 125 feet. The spandrel work has been faced with pebble aggregate concrete and the triple arch ring and coping are finished with smooth concrete. Smooth concrete pilasters flank the arch and create the appearance of structural abutments even though they are merely decorative. The bridge is finished with a neoclassical ornamental balustrade and imposing bronze lions rest on granite cheek blocks at the ends of the bridge on Sixteenth Street, N. W.

Significance:

Sixteenth Street Bridge is significant to the field of civil engineering as being the first parabolic concrete arch built in the United States. The neoclassical bridge also is a smaller, but no less elegant example of the masonry-arched type of structures that were built along the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, such as the Taft and Dumbarton or Q Street Bridge. The Sixteenth Street Bridge also incorporates significant sculptural work by Alexander P. Proctor from which the structure derives its nickname "Tiger Bridge."

(20) Old Military Road Bridge --Joyce Road Bridge (1929).  
Architect/Builder: Bridge Division of D. C. Commission. [RCP-RPI  
3450- 7307]

Description:

The old Military Road Bridge spans Rock Creek near the intersection of Joyce Road and Beach Drive. The superstructure consists of steel beams designed as simple flat spans supporting a concrete deck and resting on concrete abutments. The bridge's overall length is 90 feet and the total roadway width is 38 feet with sidewalks of 6 feet each. The surface of the structure is simple unfinished concrete, but it has carefully been molded to imitate classical ornament and detailing. Rusticated abutments, an enriched moldings on the sides of the deck, and a balustraded parapet create a elegant Neoclassical expression from the formed concrete.

Historically significant for its associations with the development of Rock Creek Park by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1920s.

(21) Milkhouse Ford and Cross Valley Road Structures, (1904).  
Architect/Builder: U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Description:

Milkhouse Ford is located on Rock Creek east of Beach Drive approximately three-quarters of mile north of Military Road. The ford was an old natural crossing of the creek and in 1904 when it was paved it was the only means of reaching Beach Drive from the western part of the park above Military Road. The paving consists of six to eight inches of concrete that is twenty four feet wide and seventy four feet long. The approaches on each side were also paved with granite block at this time, but have since been replaced with cobblestone. The flow of water over the ford usually does not exceed more than a few inches in depth over the course of the year. Two irregularly coursed rubbed stone structures flank the crossing which incorporate benches for pedestrians resting at and viewing the crossing.

Significance:

Milk House Ford is historically significant as the oldest and only extant operable ford along Rock Creek. Once a common crossing fords were steadily replaced by bridges in the twentieth century. The structure has strong associations with the early development of Rock Creek Park by the Board of Control and reflects the rugged character of the park's road system before extensive bridge construction and paving.

(22) Morrow Drive Bridge (1911), Architect/Builder: U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Description:

The Morrow Drive Bridge is a large stone arched culvert which spans a brook approximately one-quarter mile west of the intersection of Morrow Drive and Sixteenth Street on the eastern edge of Rock Creek Park. The stone culvert was built at a right angle to the brook it crosses and has a single arch with a overall length of 65 feet and roadway width of 21 feet.

Significance:

Historically significant for its associations with the development of Rock Creek Park by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1910s.

(23) Rapids Footbridge, (1934-1935). Builder/Architect: National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Designs. [RCP-RPI 3450-7438]

Description:

The Rapids Footbridge is located on a pedestrian trail and spans Rock Creek approximately three quarters of a mile south of Joyce Road. The overall length of the bridge is 110 feet and its width is 5 feet 5 inches. Two stone piers and creekside abutments with wing walls support a long arched concrete span. The piers have a diamond shaped batter of one quarter inch to one foot. All masonry on the piers and abutments are square cut ashlar stone laid in regular courses. Wooden chamfered posts and railings with finials complete the bridge's design and are secured to the concrete deck with anchor bolts.

Significance:

Rapids Footbridge is an excellent example of the inconspicuous modern rustic style bridge type advocated by Albert H. Good in his design source book, Park Structures and Facilities (1935). Rapids Footbridge was illustrated in this book and is a material example of the service's attempt to bring a consistent standard of simple structural design to all its parks.

(24) Rolling Meadow Bridge (1934-35). Builder/Architect: National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Designs. [RCP-RPI 3450-7434]

Description:

The Rolling Meadow Footbridge is located on a pedestrian trail and spans Rock Creek just east of Beach Drive approximately one quarter of a mile north of Joyce Road. The overall length of the bridge is 94 feet and its width is 6 feet 5 inches. Two stone piers and creekside abutments with wing walls support a long arched concrete span. The piers have a diamond shaped batter of one quarter inch to one foot. All masonry on the piers and abutments are square cut ashlar stone laid in regular courses. The bridge's wings are stepped and simple iron railings complete the bridge's design.

Significance:

Rolling Meadow Footbridge is one of a series of eight bridges, Rapids Footbridge being the most notable, that were built in Rock Creek Park during the Depression era. All of the structures were Public Works Administration projects. Designed in the modern rustic style, the series of bridges exemplified the bridge types advocated by Albert H. Good in the design source book, Park Structures and Facilities (1935).

(25) Riley Spring Bridge (1934-35). Builder/Architect: National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Designs. [RCP-RPI 3450- 7432].

Description:

The Riley Springs Footbridge is located on a bridle path just east of Beach Drive and spans Rock Creek approximately one-half of a mile south of Wise Road. The overall length of the bridge is 120 feet and its width is 10 feet. Two stone piers and creekside abutments with wing walls support a long arched concrete span. The piers have a diamond shaped batter of one quarter inch to one foot. All masonry on the piers and abutments are square cut ashlar stone laid in regular courses. Concrete chamfered posts and railings with finials complete the bridge's design and are secured to the concrete deck with anchor bolts.

Significance:

Riley Spring Footbridge is one of a series of eight bridges, Rapids Footbridge being the most notable, that were built in Rock Creek Park during the Depression era. All of the structures were Public Works Administration projects. Designed in the modern rustic style, the series of bridges exemplified the bridge types advocated by Albert H. Good in the design source book, Park Structures and Facilities (1935).

(26) Boundary Bridge (1934-35). Builder/Architect: National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Designs. [RCP-RPI 3450-7430]

Description:

The Boundary Bridge is located on a pedestrian/bridle trail and spans Rock Creek at the District of Columbia boundary line approximately one hundred feet northeast of Beach Drive. The overall length of the bridge and abutments is 127 feet and its width is 11 feet 6 inches. Two stone piers and creekside abutments with wing walls support a long arched concrete span. The piers have a diamond shaped batter of one quarter inch to one foot. All masonry on the piers and abutments are square cut ashlar stone laid in regular courses. Wooden chamfered posts and simple flat railings complete the bridge's design and are secured to the concrete deck with anchor bolts.

Significance:

Boundary Bridge is one of a series of eight bridges, Rapids Footbridge being the most notable, that were built in Rock Creek Park during the

Depression era. All of the structures were Public Works Administration projects. Designed in the modern rustic style, the series of bridges exemplified the bridge types advocated by Albert H. Good in his design source book, Park Structures and Facilities (1935).

(27) Bluffs Bridge (1934-35). Builder/Architect: National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Designs. [RCP-RPI 3450-7444]

Description:

The Bluffs Bridge is located on a pedestrian/bridle trail and spans Rock Creek at a point approximately two hundred yards above the mouth of Piney Branch. The overall length of the bridge and abutments is 90 feet and its width is 6 feet. One stone pier and creekside abutments with wing walls support a low arched concrete span. The piers have a diamond shaped batter of one quarter inch to one foot. All masonry on the piers and abutments are square cut ashlar stone laid in regular courses. Wooden chamfered posts and railings complete the bridge's design and are secured to the concrete deck with anchor bolts.

Significance:

Bluffs Footbridge is one of a series of eight bridges, Rapids Footbridge being the most notable, that were built in Rock Creek Park during the Depression era. All of the structures were Public Works Administration projects. Designed in the modern rustic style, the series of bridges exemplified the bridge types advocated by Albert H. Good in the design source book, Park Structures and Facilities (1935).

(28) Circulation Network--Historic Roads and Trails (1830-1941)  
Architect/Builder: U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and others. [RCP-RPI 3450- 7251]

Description:

The roads and trails of Rock Creek Park form a historically significant circulation system built and improved between 1831 and 1941. According to the 1985 Rock Creek Park management plan, the road system is 18.79 miles long and the standard width of roadway is 20 feet. Historically the macadamized roads of the park built before World War I were 18 feet in width and the cuts varied from 24 feet to 30 feet. A comparison of a 1918 Olmsted Plan Map, a National Park Service annotated version of that base map prepared in 1939 indicating existing road conditions in the park, and a

modern topography map prepared in 1989, illustrated that the alignment and width of the roads has not changed significantly since 1939. Extensive sections of the roadbed of Bingham and Beach Drive and Piney Branch Parkway were reconstructed, dangerous curves were smoothed, and intersections were rebuilt in 1958, but this work did not effect the designed integrity of the drives. The historically significant roads are listed below and the significant sections are indicated on the attached map:

Beach Drive(1897-1900)  
Pierce Mill (Park) Road (1831)  
Piney Branch Parkway (1935)  
Grant Road (1862)  
Sherrill Drive (1921-1925)  
Wise Road (1900)  
Bingham Drive (1921-25)  
Joyce Road (1921-1925)  
Ridge (Glover) Road (1899-1901)  
Ross Drive (1902-1903)  
Morrow Drive (1911)

The significant hiking and equestrian trails do not have individual names, but can be defined as part of the 15 and one-half miles of unsurfaced trails in Rock Creek Park. The historic segments are illustrated on the accompanying district map. [RCP-RPI 3450- 7406 and 7408]

Significance:

The National Park Service's road and trail system are historically significant for their association with the transformation of Reservation 339 from largely remote farmland into a vital and accessible component of the national capital's park system between 1890 and 1933. The historic segments of the circulation system is also highly significant for the high quality of their construction and design, which successfully minimized disturbance of the natural beauty of the park environment.

(29) Rock Creek Golf Course (1923-1926) Architect/Builder: Payne, Irving W. and Flynn, William S. [RCP-RPI 3450-8012]

Description:

The Rock Creek golfcourse is located on a 108 acre tract of land roughly bounded by Military Road on the south, Sherill Drive on the north, Beach Drive on the west, and Sixteenth Street on the east. The course is accessed by a roadway entrance at Sixteenth and Rittenhouse Streets, N. W. This curving roadway leads to a fork which continues on to Joyce Road or off in the other direction to the clubhouse and parking lot. The site for the course was selected in 1921 and work began in clearing the land in that year. This section of Rock Creek Park was chosen for the site because it required minimal clearing or earth moving because much of the land had been farmland. In 1922 noted American golf architect, William S. Flynn, was employed to locate the greens and tees for the new course. Flynn's recommendations were translated by landscape architect Irving W. Payne into the design of two nine-hole golfcourses which were completed in 1923 and 1926.

The combined distance of the two courses was 5,191 yards and the par was 70 strokes. The courses as they were laid out in 1926 and as they are played today:

1926

<u>Course A</u>	<u>Course B</u>
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Yardage

1. 304	1. 406
2. 281	2. 148
3. 167	3. 248
4. 336	4. 168
5. 97	5. 315
6. 216	6. 451
7. 327	7. 435
8. 459	8. 159
9. 318	9. 356

1989

Yardage

1. 296	10. 384
2. 268	11. 155
3. 140	12. 276
4. 185	13. 165

5.	200	14.	320
6.	364	15.	390
7.	184	16.	400
8.	269	17.	162
9.	315	18.	330

Today the course plays shorter at 4,803 yards and the par is 65 strokes because a realignment of Military Road in 1958 cut into the acreage of the front nine of the course. The tees, greens, and traps have been moved, rebuilt, and reoriented many times since the course was first laid out. However, the fairways, particularly on the back nine holes are largely unchanged. The front nine's open and rolling landscape of what was once farmland is also intact. The highlight of the course is the tight, hilly back nine, which was built on what had historically been uncultivated woodland. This distinctive natural quality of the design remains evident today.

Significance:

Rock Creek golf course is historically significant as one of the first major active recreational facilities built in the park and reflects the park's transition from pleasure ground to playground as more active forms of recreation, such as golf and tennis, became popular.

(30) Outdoor Fireplaces (ca. 1920-1941).

Description:

There are six historic outdoor fireplaces in Rock Creek Park designed in a Rustic style. They are located at Picnic areas 2, 6a, 6b, 7, 8 and 13. The structures average 3 feet in width and 6 feet in height inclusive of the chimney. The hearth-type fireplaces were constructed with randomly piled boulders to suggest a natural outcropping.

Significance:

Designed in the National Park Service's rustic style, the series of structures exemplified the fireplace types advocated by Albert H. Good in the design source book, Park Structures and Facilities (1935).

(31) Culverts and Retaining Walls, (ca. 1900-1941).Description:

The numerous elements of this structural system has not been individually surveyed. Sections of retaining wall and small culverts (in many cases these structures are retaining walls pierced by a drain) are located throughout Rock Creek Park. In general the historic characteristics of this system of landscape elements can be defined as a native stone material laid in a variety of sizes in mortar or in a few cases dry designed to appear informal and inconspicuous. Examples of this historic construction are the three Bingham Road culverts built in 1923 and the Piney Branch Parkway retaining walls erected in 1936.

Significance:

Designed in the rustic style, the series of structures reflect the interpretation of naturalistic park structure design by the Army engineers before and after the influential 1918 Olmsted Rock Creek Park planning report. The 1930s structures (i.e. Piney Branch Parkway retaining wall) also illustrate the modern rustic aesthetic advocated by Albert H. Good in the design source book, Park Structures and Facilites (1935).

**NON-CONTRIBUTING PROPERTIES:**

Rock Creek Park-Real Property Inventory Code Numbers (RCP-RPI) are listed where possible to aid identifications.

**Rock Creek Park Headquarters and Maintenance Yard Area, Glover Road**

- (1) RCP-RPI 3450-7100 Administration Office and Storage, 1959.
- (2) RCP-RPI 3450-7101 Storage Room and Garage, 1959.
- (3) RCP-RPI 3450-7102 Tool Shed, 1979.
- (4) RCP-RPI 3450-7106 Salt Storage Shed, 1960.
- (5) RCP-RPI 3450-7107 Storage Shed, 1950.
- (6) RCP-RPI 3450-7108 Gas Storage Shed, 1974.
- (7) RCP-RPI 3450-7110 Sewer Injection House, 1970.

**Horse Center Area, Glover Road.**

- (8) RCP-RPI 3450-7116 Training Stable and Barn, 1972.
- (9) RCP-RPI 3450-7117 Edgewater Stable, 1958.

Nature Center, Glover Road

(10) RCP-RPI 3450-7120 Nature Center (Visitor Exhibition Center), 1959.

Park Police Buildings, Oregon Avenue

(11) H-2 Park Police Stables, 1959;1980.  
(12) H-2 Park Police Trailer (1980)  
(13) RCP-RPI 3450-7126 Dog Pound Shelter, 1970. Oregon Avenue.  
(14) RCP-RPI 3450-7127 Dog Pound, 1970. Oregon Avenue.

Rock Creek Golfcourse, 16th and Rittenhouse Streets

(15) RCP-RPI 3450-7135 Clubhouse, RC Golfcourse, 1963.  
(16) RCP-RPI 3450-7136 Storage Shed and Garage, 1982.  
(17) RCP-RPI 3450-7140 Shelter 6, 1960.  
(18) RCP-RPI 3450-7141 Shelter 14, 1960.  
(19) RCP-RPI 3450-7142 Shelter 16, 1960.

Carter-Barron Theater Area, 16th Street and Colorado Avenue.

(20) RCP-RPI 3450-7155 Carter Barron Ticket Office, 1950.  
(21) RCP-RPI 3450-7156 Carter Barron Bus Shelter, 1950.  
(22) RCP-RPI 3450-7157 Parking Lot Guard House, 1950.  
(23) RCP-RPI 3450-7500 Carter Barron Ampitheater and Stage, 1950.

Comfort Stations

(24) RCP-RPI 3450-7146 Comfort Station, Grove # 24, 16th and Kennedy, 1950.  
(25) RCP-RPI 3450-7172 Art Barn Comfort Station, Tilden and Beach Drive, 1917; Moved 1936;1950.  
(26) RCP-RPI 3450-7130 Comfort Station, Grove #10, Beach Drive, 1930; 1950.  
(27) RCP-RPI 3450-7133 Comfort Station, Grove #6, Beach Drive, 1950.  
(28) RCP-RPI 3450-7175 Comfort Station, Grove #1, South of Tilden and Beach Drive, 1950.

Picnic Shelters

- (29) Picnic Shelter, Grove # 1, Beach and Tilden, 1958.
- (30) RCP-RPI 3450-7178 Pavilion Shelter, Grove #16, Beach Drive, 1970.
- (31) RCP-RPI 3450-7128 Pavilion Shelter, Grove #18B, Glover Road, 1970.
- (32) RCP-RPI 3450-7109 Pavilion Shelter, Grove #23, 16th and Colorado, 1970.
- (33) RCP-RPI 3450-7147 Pavilion Shelter, Grove #24, 16th and Kennedy, 1950.
- (34) RCP-RPI 3450-7183 Pavilion Shelter, Grove #15-B, Glover Road, 1950.

Bridges--Vehicular

- (35) RCP-RPI 3450-7301 W. Beach and Beach Drive, 1940.
- (36) RCP-RPI 3450-7302 Beach and Sherrill Drive, 1959.
- (37) RCP-RPI 3450-7305 Beach at Milkhouse Ford, 1957.
- (38) RCP-RPI 3450-7308 Joyce Road at Military and Rittenhouse, 1957.
- (39) RCP-RPI 3450-7310 Beach at Broad Branch, 1957.
- (40) RCP-RPI 3450-7311 Broad Branch and Beach Drive, 1957.
- (41) RCP-RPI 3450-7312 Glover and Broad Branch, 1957.
- (42) RCP-RPI 3450-7314 Beach Drive and Piney Branch Parkway, 1957.
- (43) RCP-RPI 3450-7315 Klingle Road and Beach Drive, 1947.
- (44) Porter Street Bridge over Beach, 1947.
- (45) Military Road Overpass, 1957.
- (46) Park Road Bridge, 1958.

Trail Bridges

- (47) RCP-RPI 3450-7436 Oregon Avenue and Beach Drive, 1970.
- (48) RCP-RPI 3450-7440 Pierce Mill Bicycle Bridge, 1968.
- (49) RCP-RPI 3450-7442 S. of Tilden Beach Drive, 1982.
- (50) RCP-RPI 3450-7450 Grove #1 Beach and Tilden, 1980.
- (51) RCP-RPI 3450-7456 Beach Drive and West Beach, 1970.
- (52) RCP-RPI 3450-7458 1/4 North of Milkhouse Ford, 1970.

Miscellaneous Properties

- (53) Rock Creek Tennis Stadium, 1987-88.
- (54) RCP-RPI 3450-7181 Storage Shed, Tennis Courts, Park Road, 1970.
- (55) RCP-RPI 3450-7145 Bicycle Rental Concession, Grove #24, 16th and Kennedy, 1970.
- (56) RCP-RPI 3450-7150 Brightwood Recreation Center Building, Stage and Kennedy, 1971.
- (57) RCP-RPI 3450-7151 Storage Shed, Tennis Courts, Kennedy, 1961.
- (58) RCP-RPI 3450-7111 Ticket Booth, Tennis Courts, Park Road, 1970.

The following list of modern sites and structures were not of sufficient scale or size to enumerate for National Register purposes, but it will be useful for park maintenance reference. In many cases the sports facilities are open fields and do not detract from the park's natural character. All were constructed or modernized in the 1970s.

RCP-RPI 3450-8014 Badminton Court (1)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014A Baseball Diamonds (2)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014B Softball Diamonds (2)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014C Basketball Courts (8)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014D Football Fields (1)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014E Soccer Fields (2)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014F Tennis Courts (8) [Park Road]  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014G Hard Surface Courts (19)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014H Volleyball Court (1)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014I Bicycle Rental Stand (1)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014J Day Camps (5)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014K Equitation Field (1) [Glover Road]  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014L Dog Obedience Course (1)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014M Parcourse Excercise (1)  
RCP-RPI 3450-8014N Orienteering Map Course (1)  
Horse Corrals (15)  
Picnic Groves (30)  
Horsehoe Pits (4)  
Barbecue Pits (35)  
Park Furniture (Benches and Picnic Tables), 1970.  
Fences, 1970.  
Signs, 1970.  
Flagpoles, 1970.  
Drinking Fountains, 1970.  
Parking Lots (14) 1970.

ROCK CREEK PARK  
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Classification:

110 Public Grounds: Landscape Architecture.

178 Miscellaneous: Commission of Fine Arts.

218 Rock Creek Park and Potomac Parkway.

303 Control of Rock Creek Park and Piney Branch Parkway.

Entry 178 Glass Plate Negatives of Statues, Memorials, and Parks, 1897-1916.

Entry 238 Proceedings of the Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, 1890-98.

Entry 239 Proceedings of the Board of Control of Rock Creek Park, 1894-1917.

Entry 240 Letters Received by the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1891-1908.

Entry 241 Correspondence of the Office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, 1897-1918.

Entry 242 Land Acquisition Records, 1891-1894.

Entry 243 Records Transferred from the Office of Secretary of the Interior.

Entry 244 Application and Recommendation for Appointments to Positions in Rock Creek Park, 1892-1896.

Entry 245 Records of the Assistant Engineer in Charge of Rock Creek Park, 1907-1918.

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Entry 305 Reference Information File Relating to Monuments and Memorials, 1925-1933. [Alphabetically arranged].

RG 66 U. S. Commission of Fine Arts.

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Adams Mill Road  
District of Columbia [Parks, Recreation Board]  
Forts around Washington, D.C.  
National Capital Parks  
National Monuments and Parks  
National Park Service  
Parks  
Planning, Parks and Government Conference of 1932  
Rock Creek Park, Washington, D.C.

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Beach Drive, 1956.  
City development, parks.  
Rock Creek Park Golf clubhouse, 1963.  
RCP Nature City and Planetarium, 1959-1960.  
Carter Barron Amphitheater.  
Fine Arts Act, statues, monuments, and memorials [Jusserand Memorial, Rock Creek Park, 1925-1938].

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District of Columbia [Parks and Playgrounds].  
Jusserand, Jean Jules, memorial.  
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General: D.C. Parks, Land Acquisition: Piney Branch Parkway.  
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Rock Creek Park.  
Rock Creek Park Estates, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

**Figure 1.** View Looking up Joyce Road Toward the Golf Course, 1931.  
(Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)

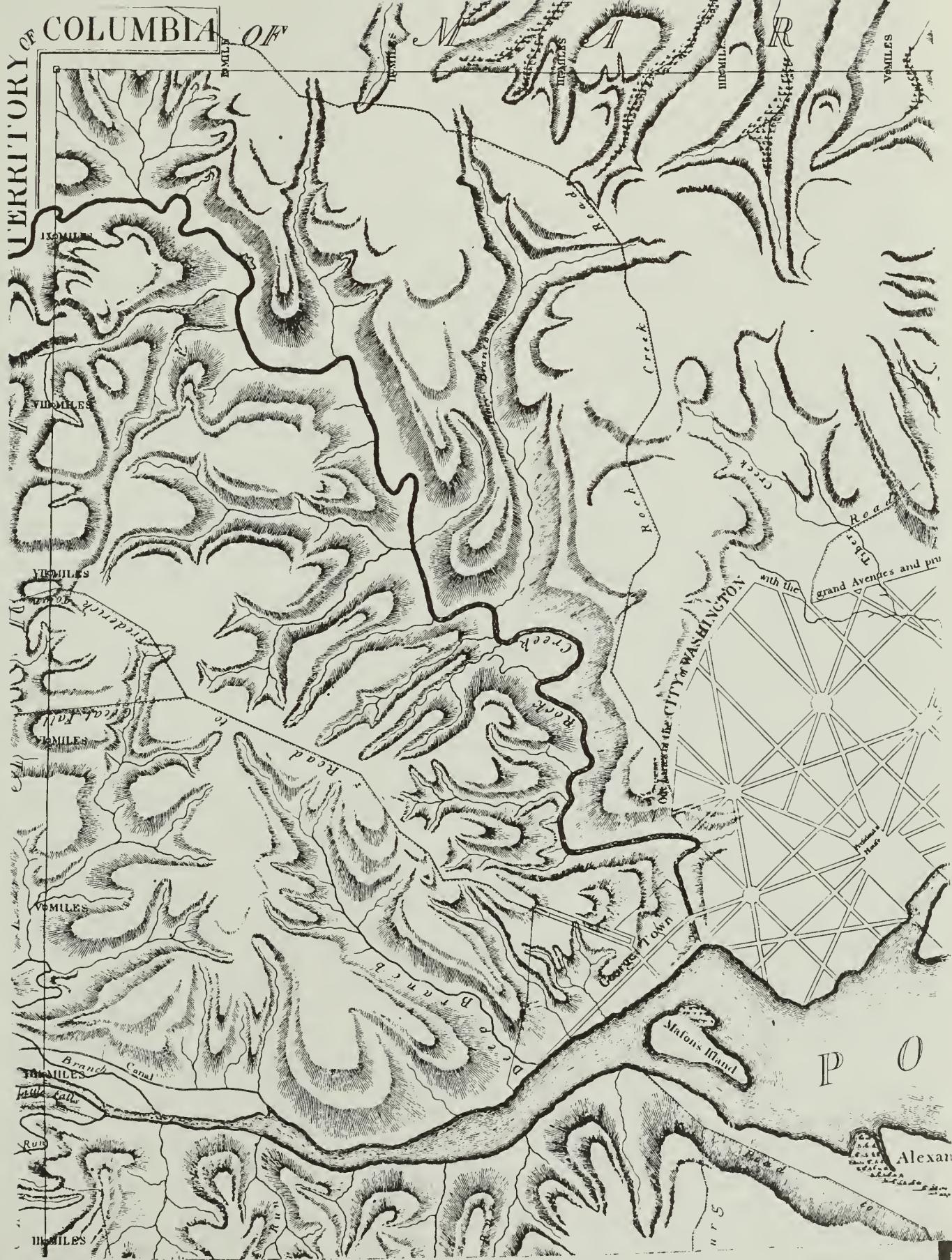


Figure 2. "Rock Creek in Olden Days"  
Plate from Thomas Nelson Page's Washington and Its Romance,  
1921. (D. C. Public Library)



Figure 3. Detail of Andrew Ellicott's map, "Territory of Columbia," 1793.  
(U.S.G.S. Copy, 1898. Library of Congress)

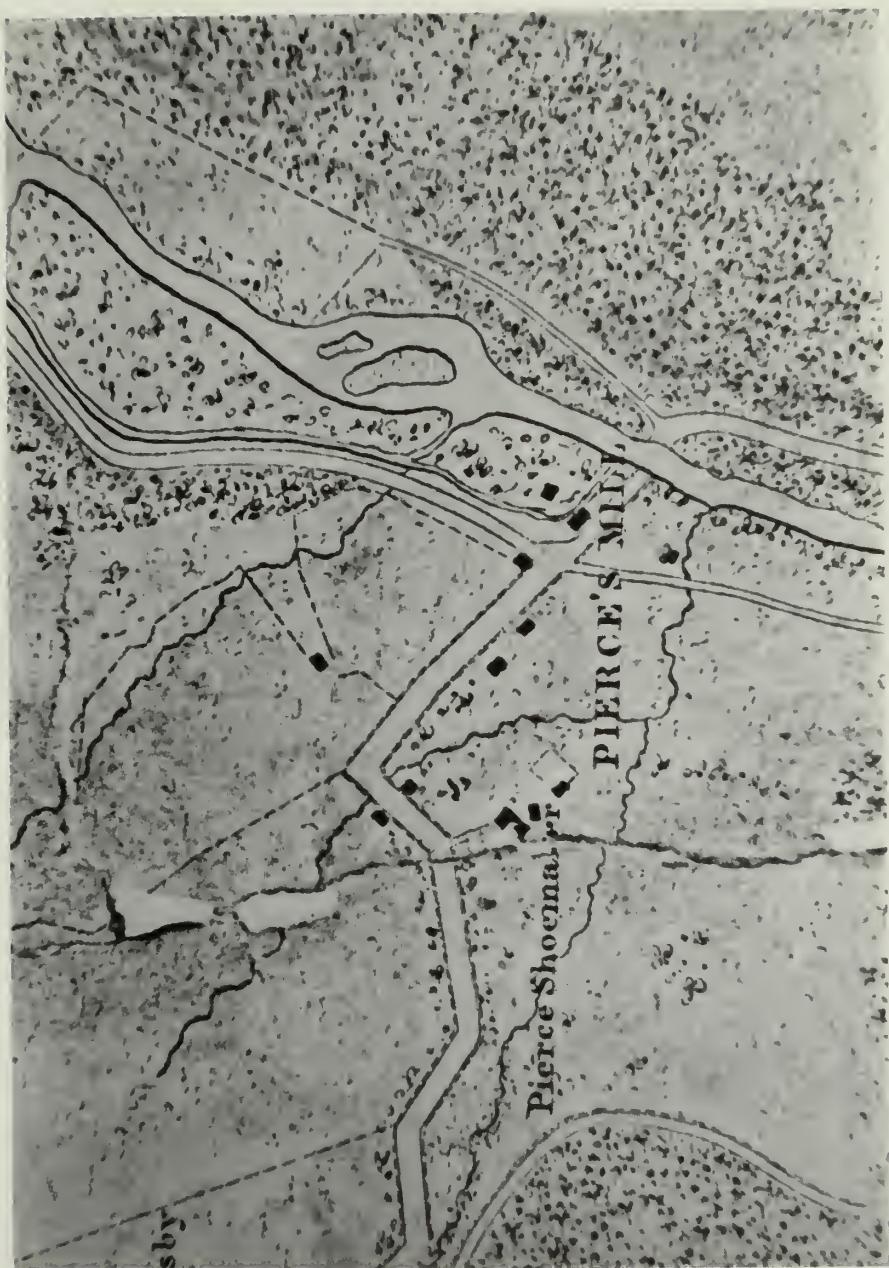
TERRITORY OF COLUMBIA



**Figure 4.** Detail of Rock Creek Valley from the Boschke Topographical Map of Washington and its Environs, 1861. (Library of Congress)



**Figure 5.** Detail of the Pierce Shoemaker estate from Michler's 1866 "Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington." (National Archives)



**Figure 6.** Detail of the Joshua Pierce estate from Michler's 1866 "Topographical Sketch of the Environs of Washington." (National Archives)

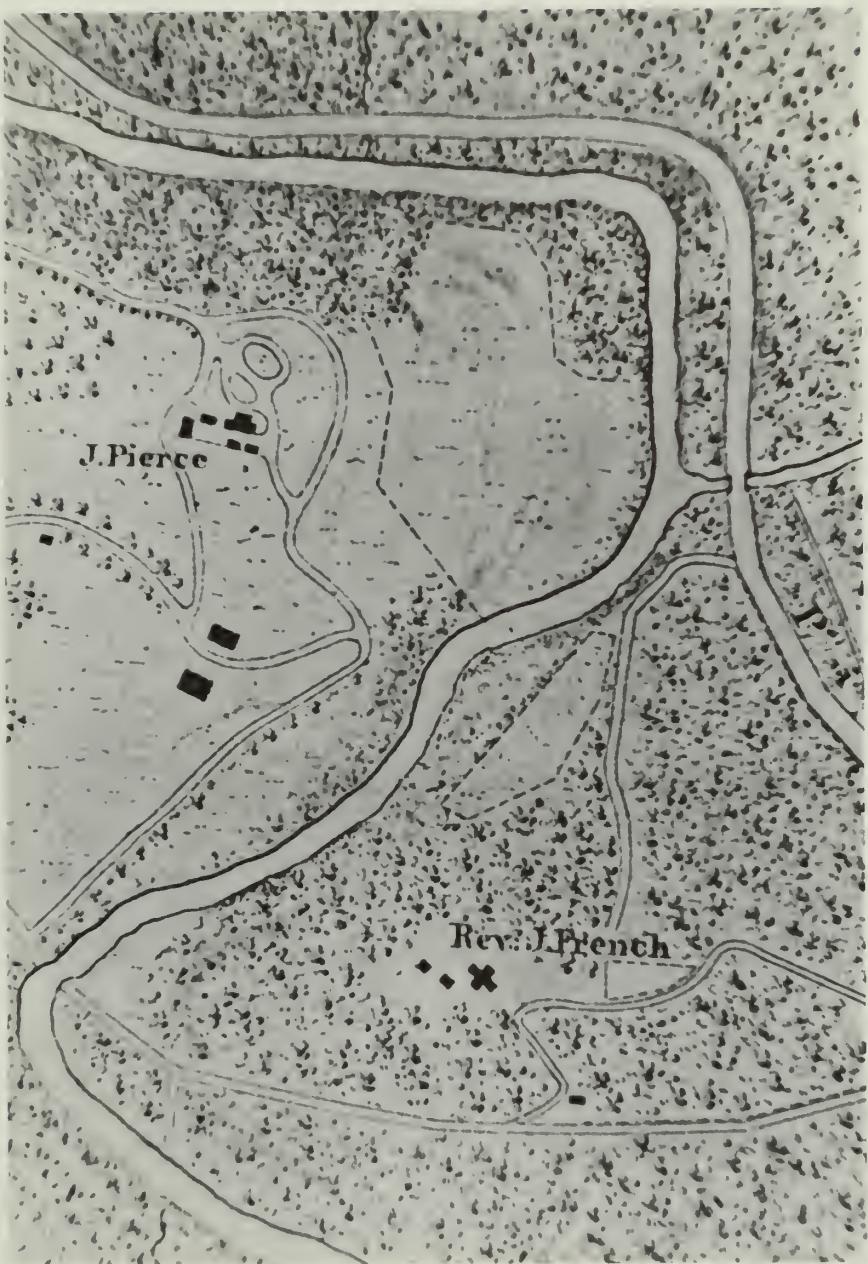


Figure 7. Fort DeRussy Earthworks, 1989. (Author)



Figure 8. Lithograph View of Rock Creek, 1875. (D. C. Public Library)

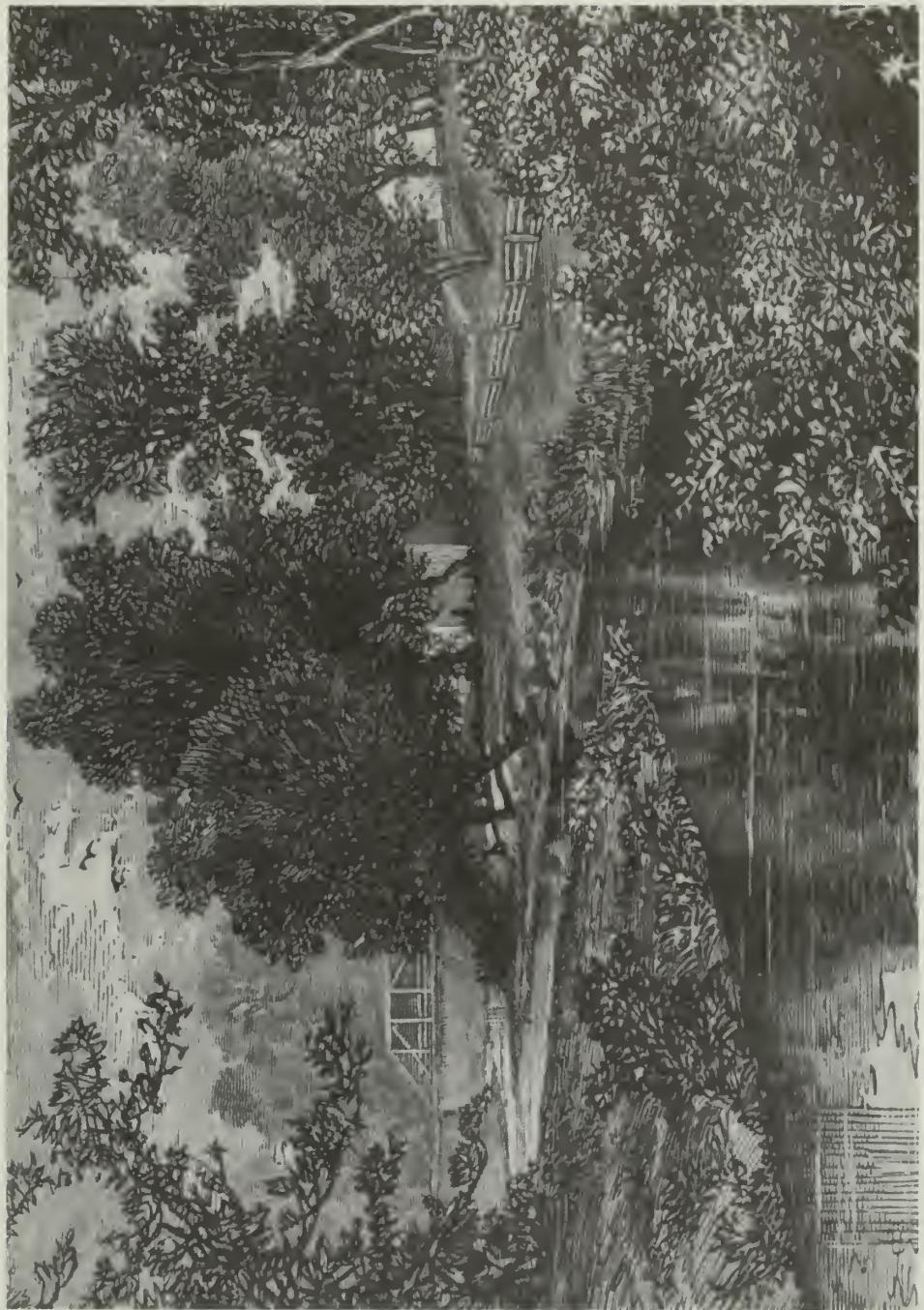


Figure 9. Detail of the Rock Creek Valley from the Lydecker topographical map of 1884 prepared under the direction of F. V. Greene. (Library of Congress)



Figure 10. Detail from Hopkins Survey Plats, 1887. (Library of Congress)

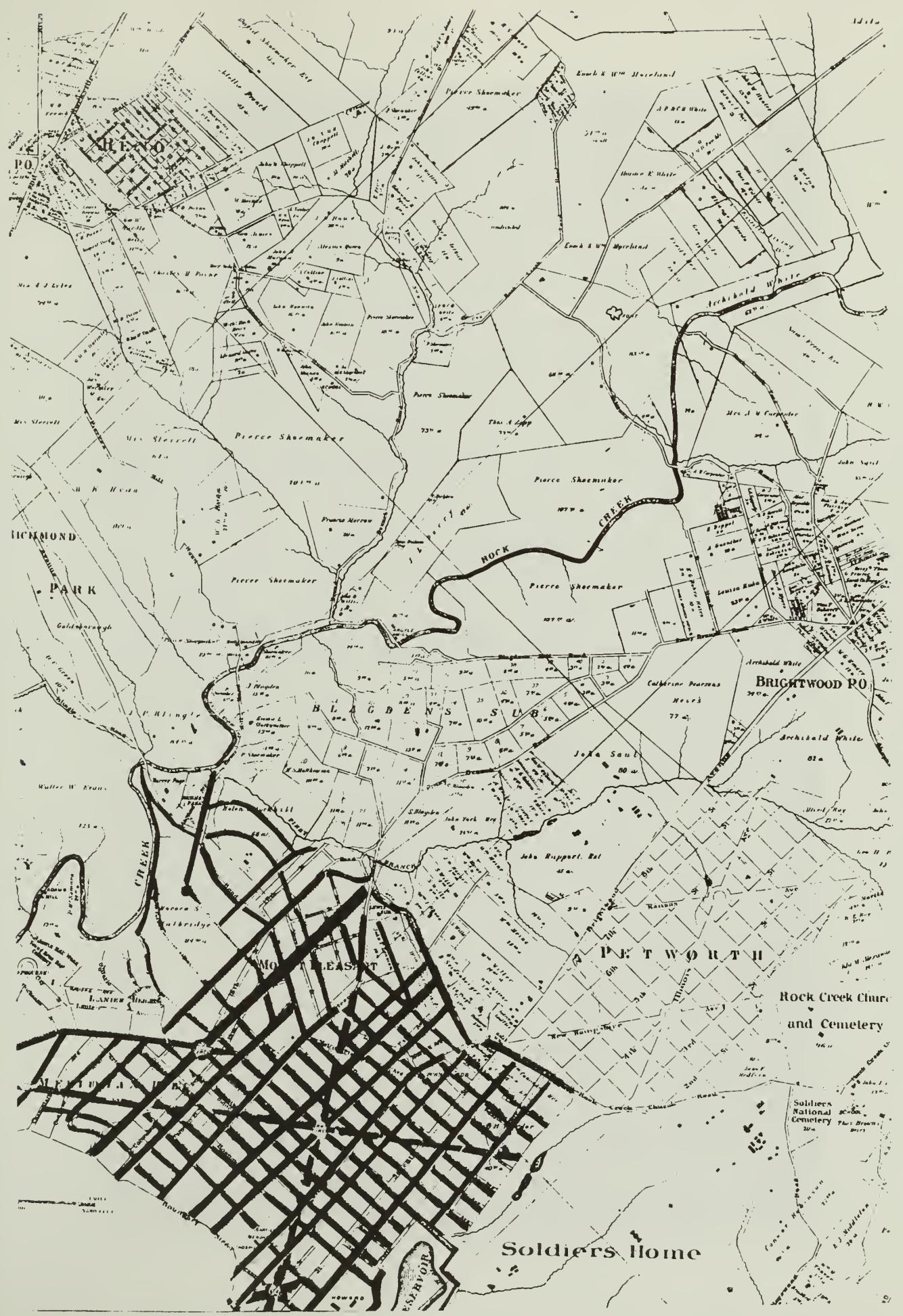


Figure 11. Kingle Ford, 1890s. (National Archives)



Figure 12. Path in Rock Creek illustrated in James Bryce's The Nation's Capital, 1913. (Author)

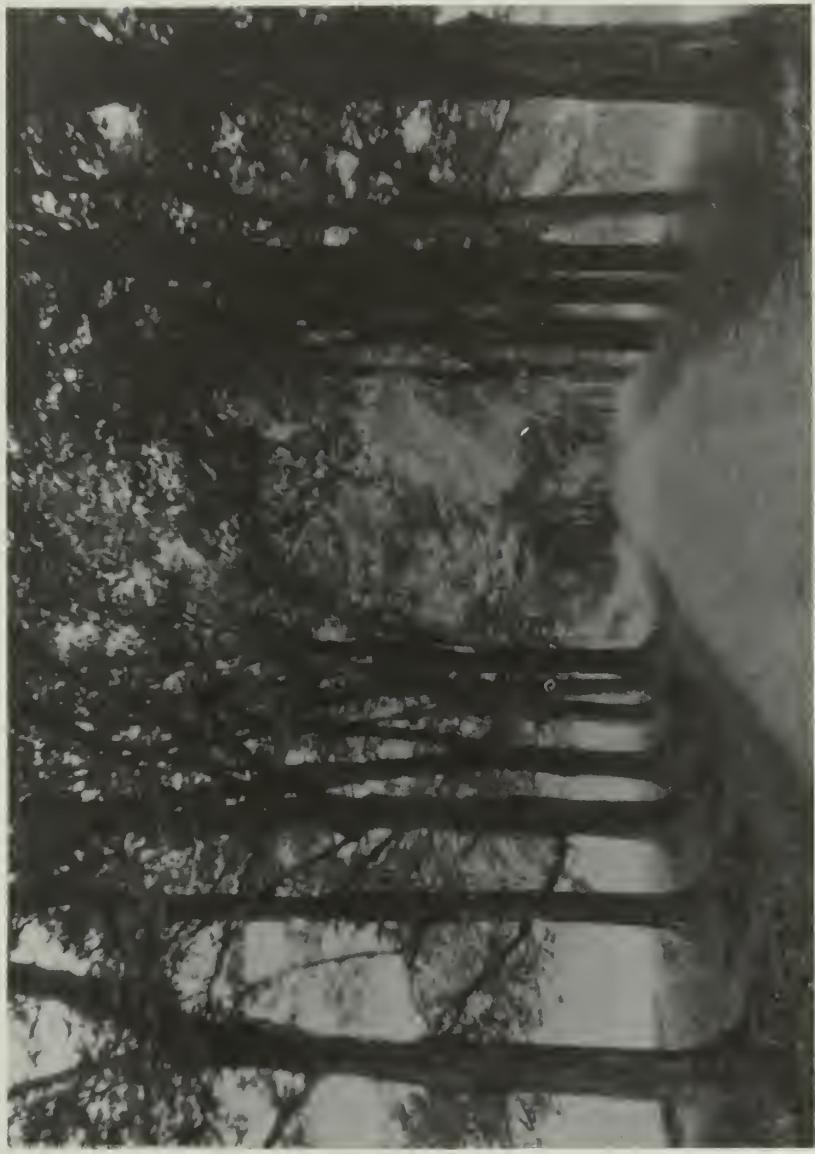


Figure 13. Hiking Group in Rock Creek Park, 1915. (Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)

RUDKÖTTEN VÄSTERGÖTELAND



Figure 14. Horseback Riders in Rock Creek Park circa. 1920.  
(Library of Congress)



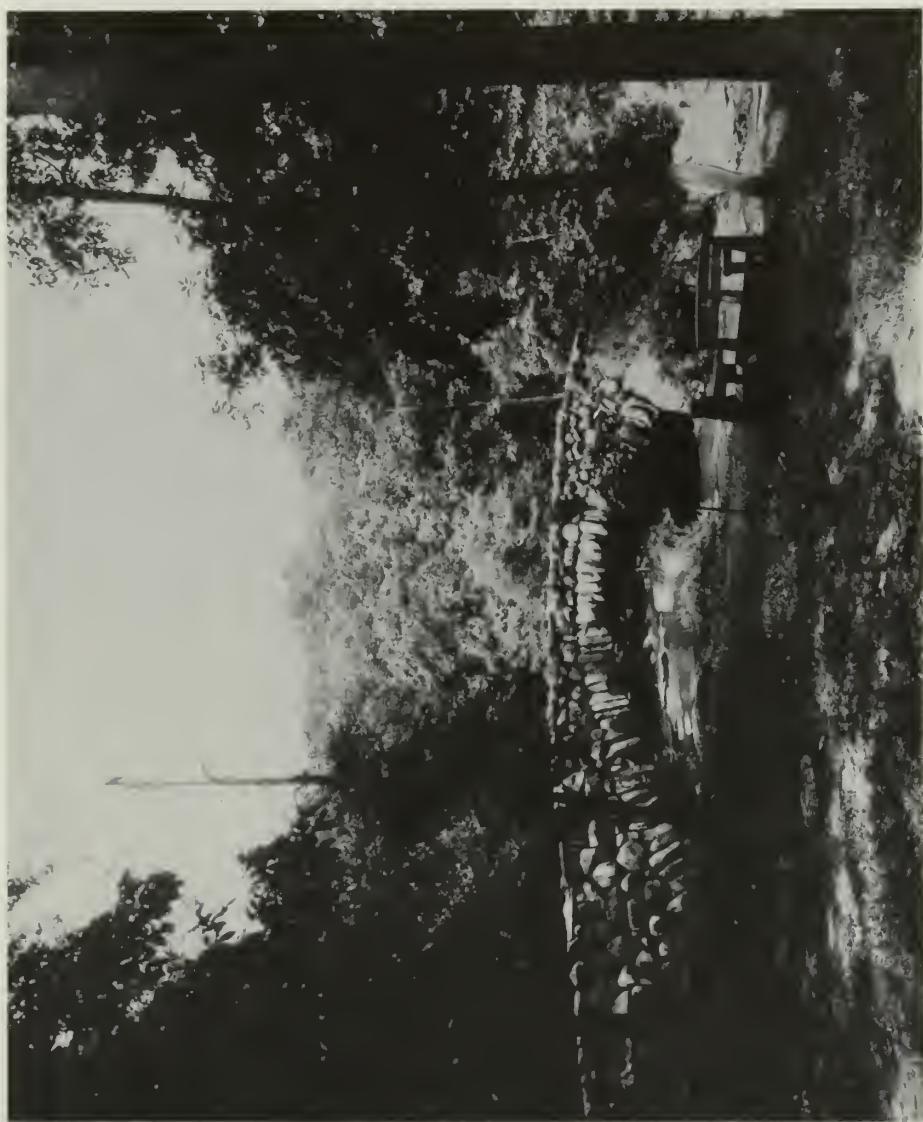
Figure 15. Bingham Drive, August 19, 1931. (Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)



Figure 16. Military Road looking west, October, 1932. (Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)



Figure 17. Boulder Bridge, ca. 1930. (National Archives)



**Figure 18.** Pebble Dash Bridge and Broad Branch Road Ford, 1920s.  
(D. C. Public Library)



Figure 19. Ross Drive Bridge, built 1907. Photograph taken 1989. (Author)



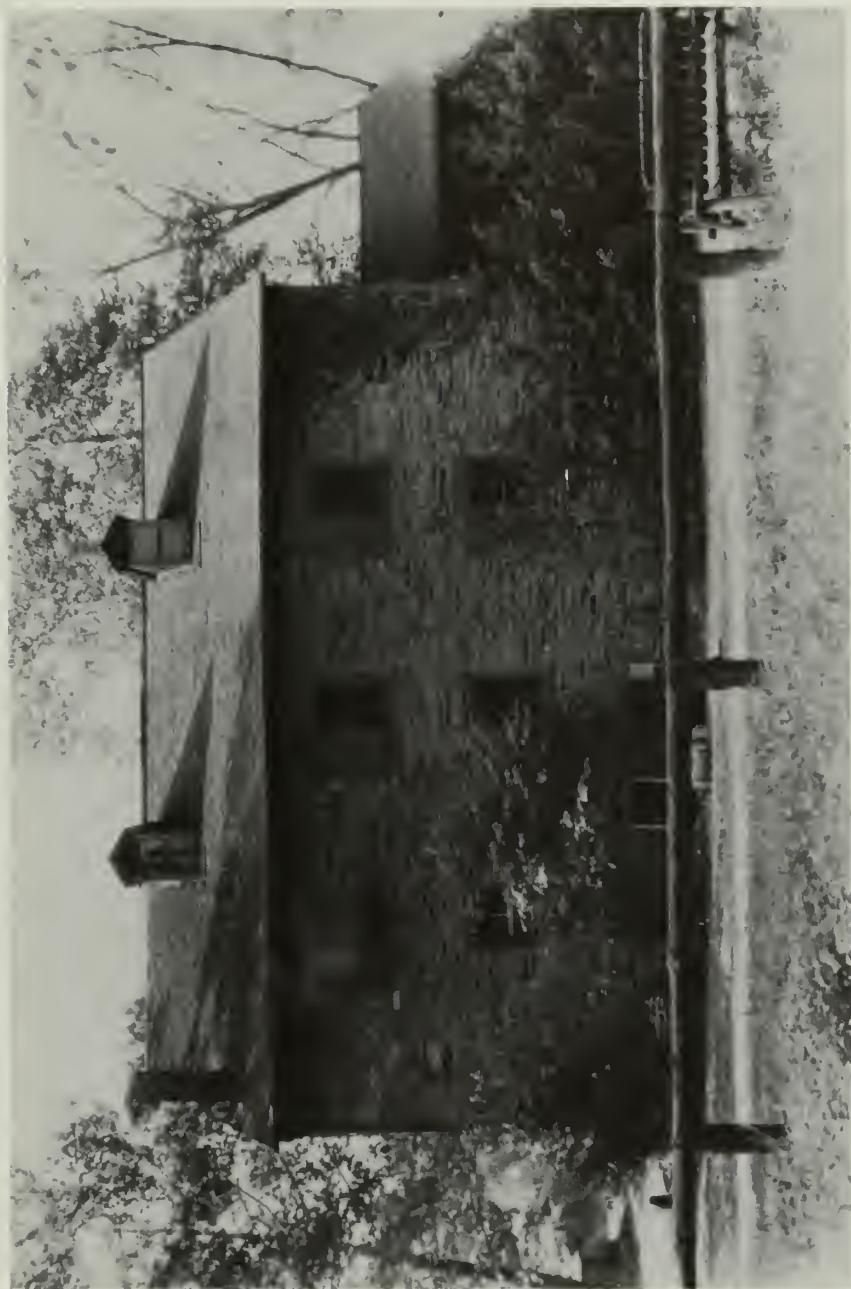
**Figure 20.** Couple picnicking by Pierce Mill Dam, ca. 1920. (Library of Congress)



**Figure 21.** Milkhouse Ford. Photograph taken in 1989 after rainstorm.  
(Author)



**Figure 22.** Pierce Mill, 1933. (National Archives)



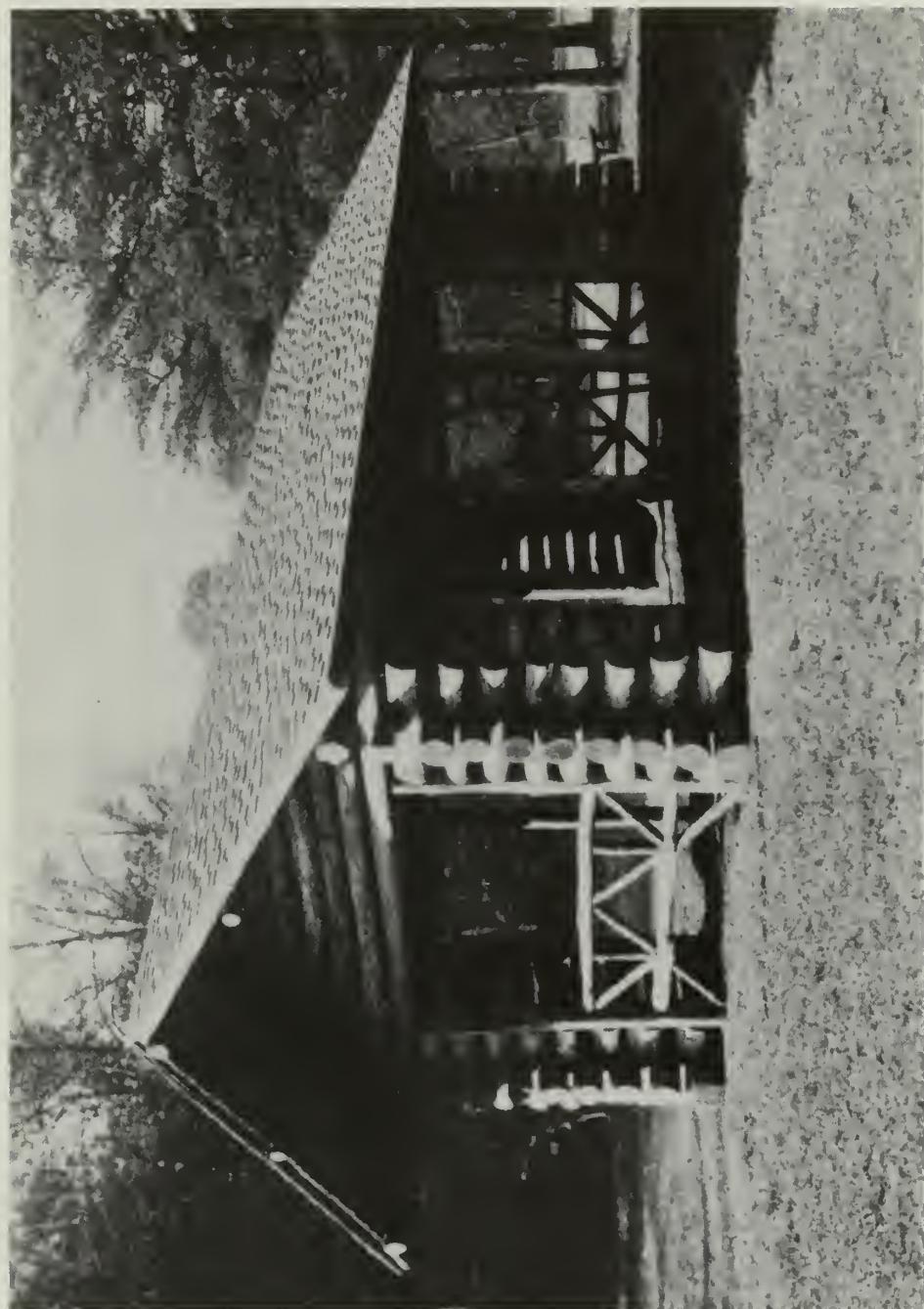
**Figure 23.** Aerial View of the Rock Creek Golfcourse, 1940s. (Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)



Figure 24. Joaquin Miller Cabin, 1989. (Author)



**Figure 25.** Temporary Log Picnic Shelter, 1920s. (D. C. Public Library)



**Figure 26.** Old Boundary Bridge, February 24, 1931. (Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)



Figure 27. Park Police Station, 1989. (Author)



Figure 28. Restoration of Pierce Mill wheel, 1936. (Library of Congress).



**Figure 29.** Detail of a site plan prepared for a proposed road relocation project at the Pierce Kingle Mansion, 1935. (National Archives).

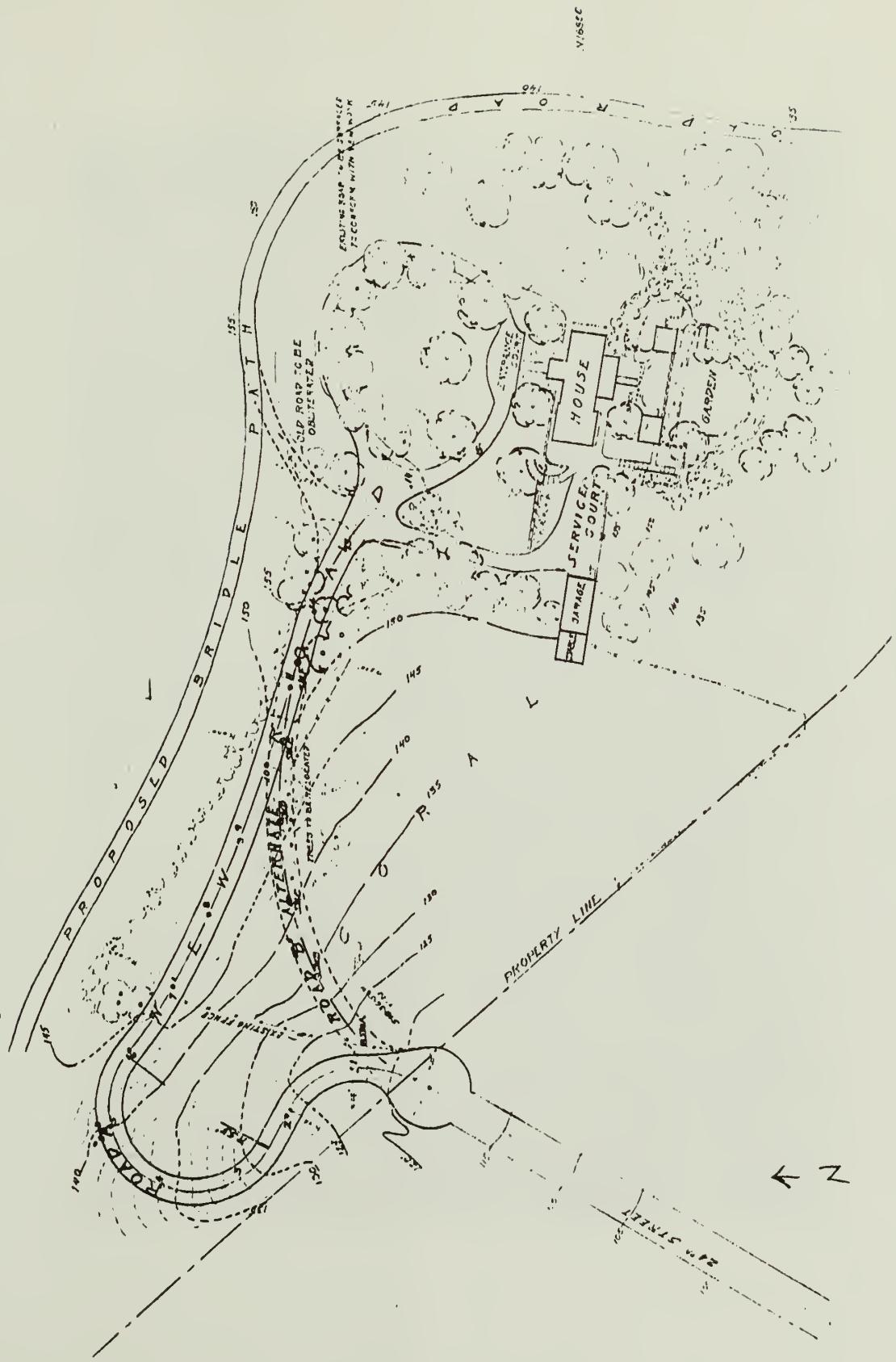


Figure 30. Pierce Kingle Mansion in the 1950s. (Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)



Figure 31. Jusserand Memorial, 1989. (Author)



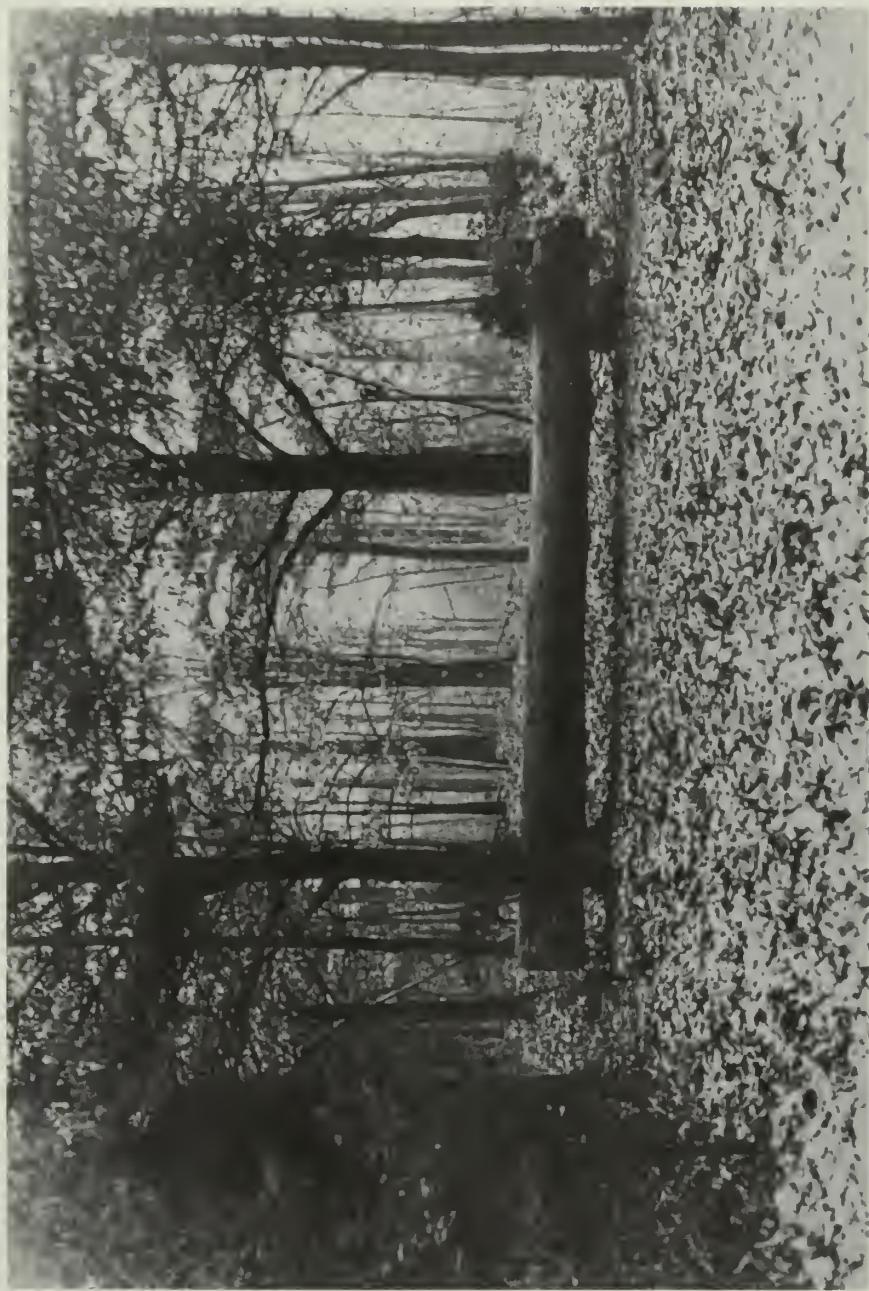
**Figure 32.** Works Progress Administration Road Crew Building the Piney Branch Parkway, 1935. Park Road Viaduct in the Background. (Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)



**Figure 33.** Civilian Conservation Corps at Work on the Grounds of the Pierce Mill, 1935. (Rock Creek Park Nature Center Collection)



Figure 34. Equestrian Trail, 1930s. (National Archives).



**Figure 35.** Traffic Congestion at the Equestrian Crossing on Tilden Street,  
ca. 1935. (Library of Congress)







## ROCK CREEK PARK

DIAGRAMATIC PLAN FOR LANDSCAPE UNITS

# ROCK CREEK PARK

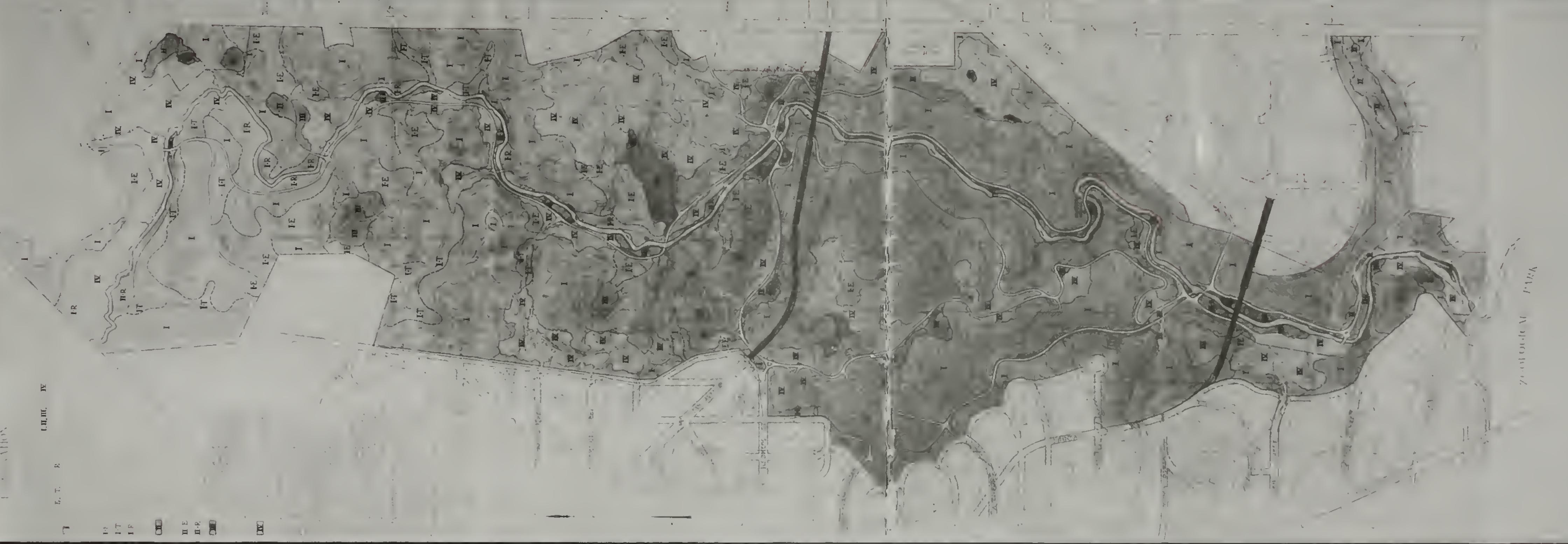
Diagrammatic Plan  
For Landscape Units

# ROCK CREEK PARK

Diagrammatic Plan  
For Landscape Units

## ROCK CREEK PARK

DIAGRAMMATIC PLAN FOR LANDSCAPE UNITS



### OLMSTED BROS. PLAN FOR LANDSCAPE UNITS, Rock Creek Park.

December, 1917

#### Key

I Indicates where natural forest  
should prevail

##### Subtypes

I-E indicates where evergreen  
should prevail

I-T indicates where tulip should  
be predominant tree

I-R indicates areas of normal  
bottom land near creek

where hornbeam, tulip and  
sycamore should prevail

##### Subtypes

II-E indicates where open tree  
growth and grassy ground  
cover should prevail

##### Subtypes

II-R indicates where river bottom  
type prevails

III-E indicates where upland  
semi-open growth should prevail

characterized chiefly by cedar, A  
little sassafras, locust, pine and other  
types of trees of like characteristics  
should accompany cedar. Undergrowth  
should be sumac, wild roses, etc.

IV indicates areas of generally open  
grass land

# ROCK CREEK PARK

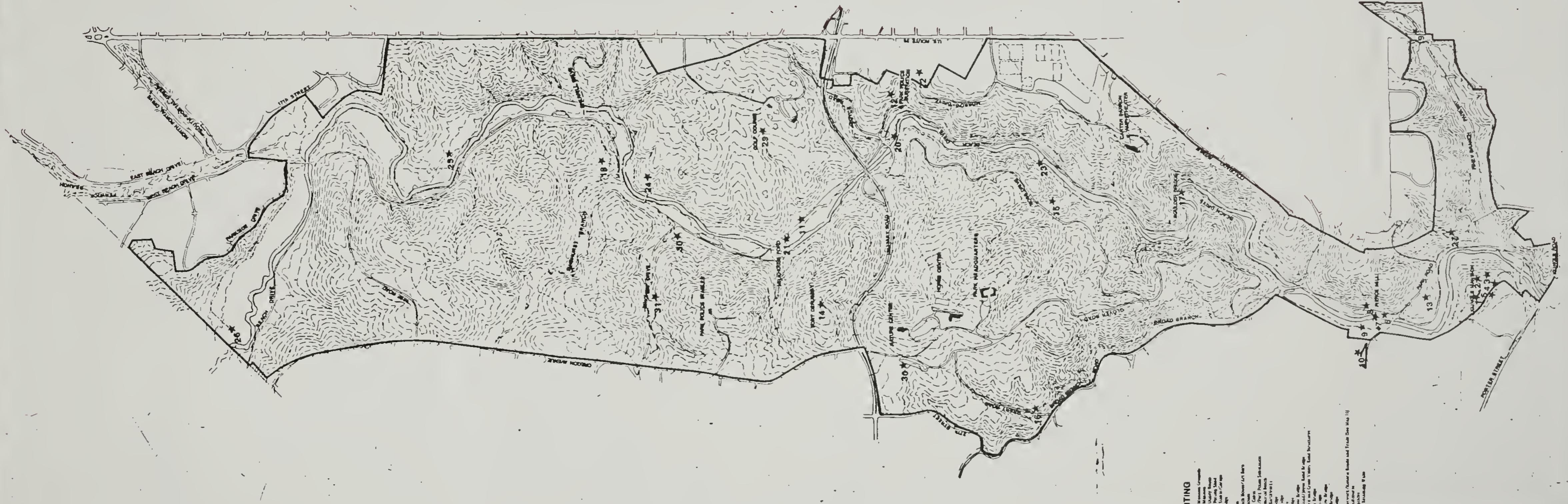


Historic Resources  
Survey Map  
1 OF 3



# ROCK CREEK PARK

**SURVEY MAP  
1 OF 3**



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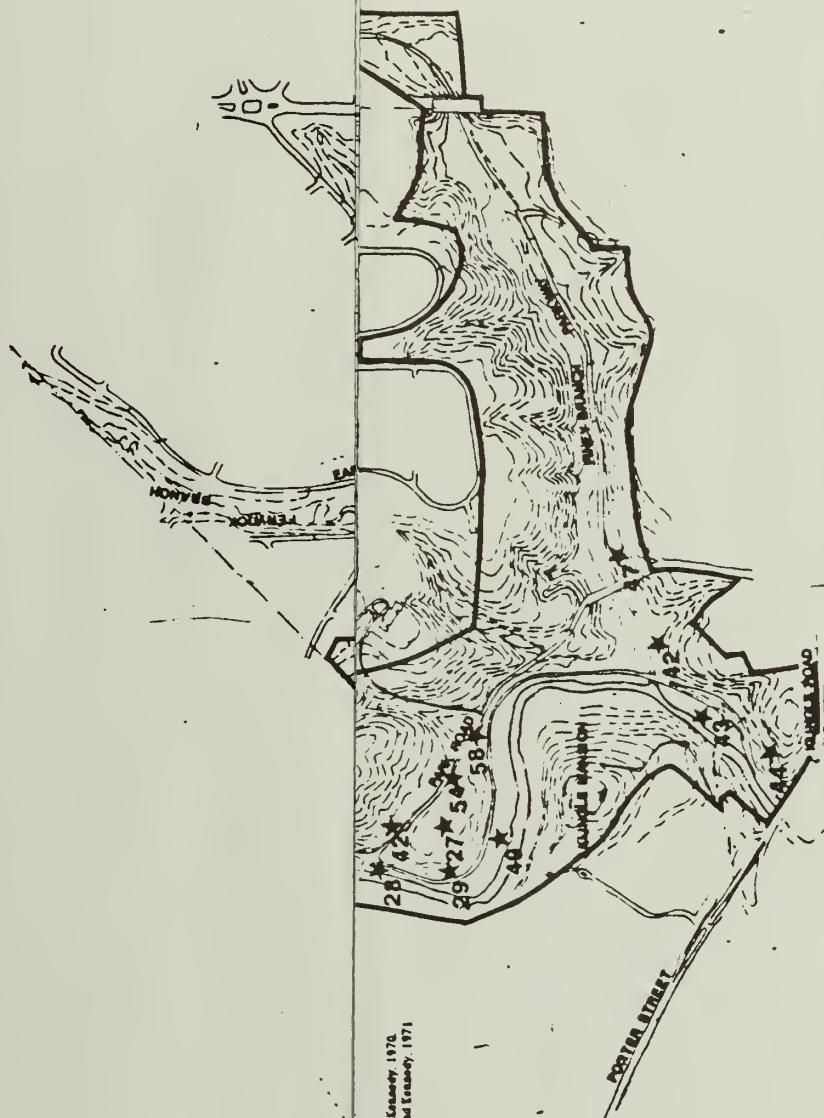
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HISTORIC RESOURCES  
SURVEY MAP  
2 OF 3

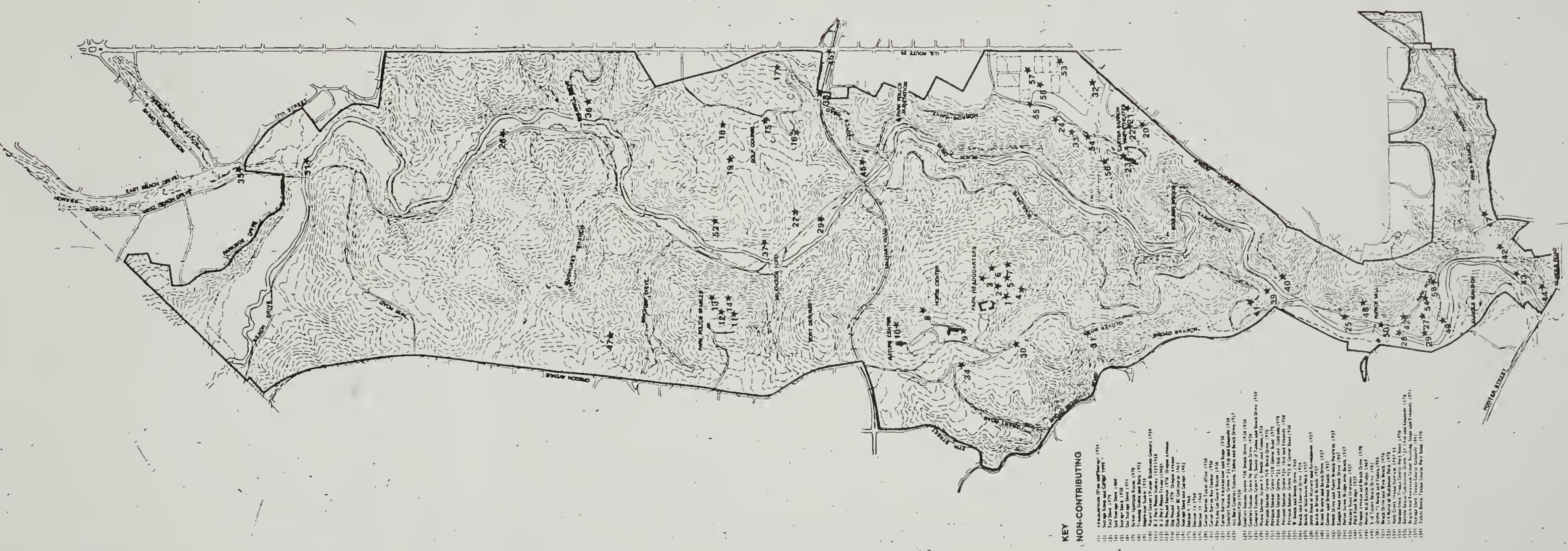
# ROCK CREEK PARK



(131) Rock Creek Tennis Academy 1937-48  
(132) San Jose Tennis Court, Park Road 1970  
(133) Berkeley Mental Corporation Grove #24 14th and Leavenworth, 1970  
(134) Berkeleywood Recreation Center Building, Stage and Leavenworth, 1971  
(135) San Jose Tennis Court, Leavenworth, 1961  
(136) Trestle Rock, Tennis Courts, Park Road, 1970



# ROCK CREEK PARK



# ROCK CREEK PARK

HISTORIC RESOURCES  
SURVEY MAP  
3 OF 3

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CIRCULATION SYSTEM

TRAILS, ROADS

28



3 OF 3-821-25001-DSC-SEPT 90



26 CIRCULATION SYSTEM

TRAILS, oooooo

ROADS, -----





As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

